TESTS: Suzuki GS750E, GS550M, Husqvarna 430CR
Honda MB5, Yamaha XV750 Virago

CYCLE GUIDE

First Test Of Suzuki's Middleweight Katana

JANUARY 1982 $1.50
UK 1.10p 47457

SUZUKI GS750 E&T

More speed, more style for last year's 750-class winner!

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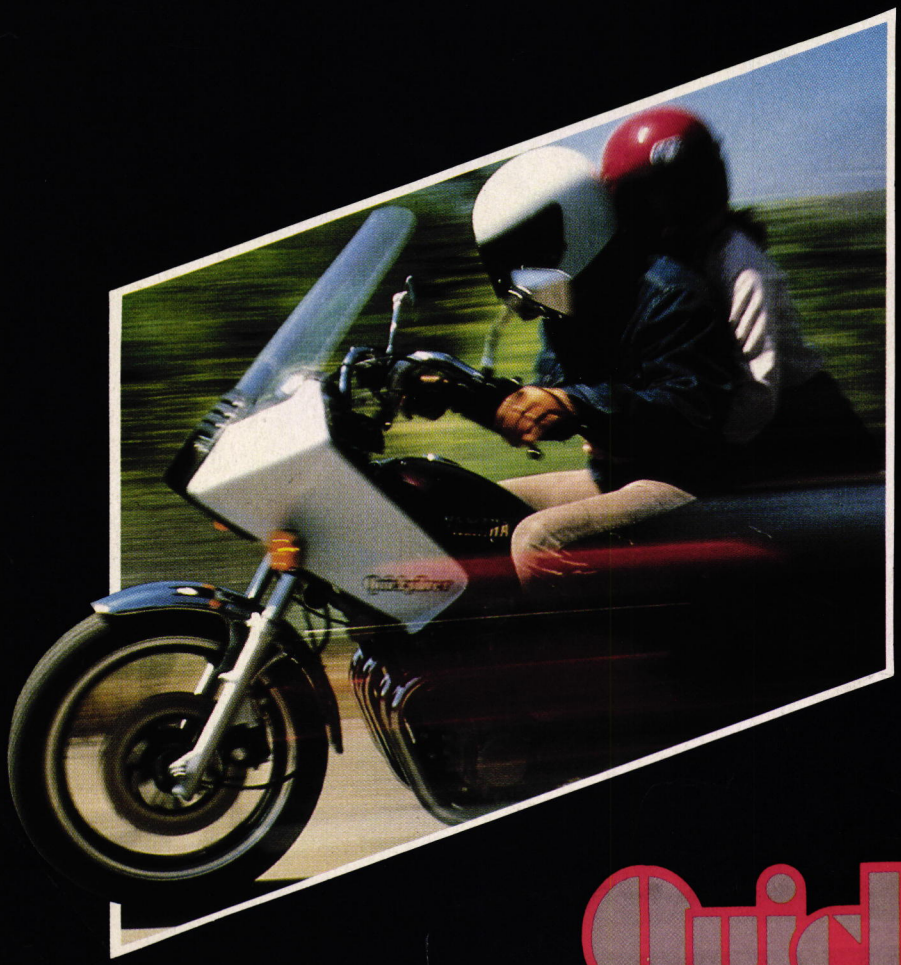

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Right now, you've got another chance to own the the most exciting middleweight money can buy, the 1982 Kawasaki KZ550.

The 550 was the hottest bike to meet the street since the original Z-1. Its power, handling and performance put the other middleweight sport bikes to shame. Motorcyclist Magazine named it "Buy of the Year." The other magazine experts* rated the KZ550 best in its class, as well. Waiting lists were miles long, and as you know, supplies ran out fast.

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But hurry. It won't be there for long. Why wait for next year to own the ultimate middleweight sport bike?

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Available October, 1981, in limited quantities. Mirrors included as standard equipment. Cable lock optional.
Kawasaki believes in riding safely. Check local laws before you ride. Member, AMA and MSF.
* Cycle Guide, Sept. '80. Cycle World, May '80, Oct. '80. Motorcyclist, Apr. '80. May '80, Feb. '81.

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QUOTE:
Think of the GS550M—or 550 Katana—as pure unobtanium, but with a half-life of weeks, not years. **—Pg. 58**

ON THE COVER:
Suzuki's GS750EZ, last year's best and brightest, better and brighter than ever before. Posing with the EZ for this family shot is the GS750TZ, factory-customized by Suzuki. Photo by Chris Eastman.

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Publisher
Peter S. Nicolaysen

Editorial Director
Paul Dean

Editor
Larry Works

Design Director
David Clark

Managing Editor
Merry MacTavish

Technical Editor
David Dewhurst

Feature Editor
Tash Matsuoka

Associate Editor
Ron Lawson

Art Director
Gilbert Luna

Editorial Assistant
Mark Diotte

Editor Emeritus
Steve Thompson

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS:
London/L.J.K. Setright
Milan/D.O. Cozzi

Sport Editor
Dain Gingerelli

East Coast Editor
Ted West

Contributors
Patrick Behar, Chris Eastman, Don Fuller, Larry Gatz, Torrey Heeb, Vic Huber, Doug Jackson, George Larson, Tom Riles, Mark Wagner, George Wegner, Terry Whytal

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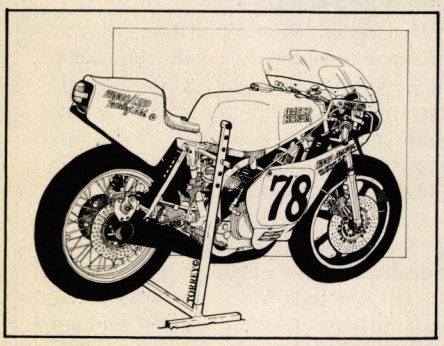

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CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS	HORSEPOWER @ RPM*		GEARS
Can-Am 250 MX-5	Jan. '79	Two-str.	10.8/10.0	218	32.1	8500	5
Can-Am 250 Qualifier III	Feb. '80	Two-str.	9.7/9.8	230	25.2	8000	6
Cam-Am 400 MX-6	June '80	Two-str.	11.5/10.8	233	38.3	6500	5
Honda CR125R	April '81	Two-str.	10.6/11.5	213	NA	NA	6
Honda CR250R	May '80	Two-str.	11.8/11.0	222	27.5	7000	5
Honda CR450R	Feb. '81	Two-str.	11.0/12.5	236	NA	NA	4
Honda XR200R	Sept. '81	Four-str.	9.0/10.2	228	NA	NA	6
Honda XR500R	Nov. '81	Four-str.	9.5/10.0	289	NA	NA	5
Husqvarna 125CR-'80	Nov. '79	Two-str.	11.8/11.8	214	18.8	11000	6
Husqvarna 250WR	July '81	Two-str.	9.5/10.3	248	20.9	7500	6
Husqvarna 420AXC	Oct. '80	Two-str.	11.5/11.9	239	NA	NA	4
Husqvarna 430CR	Jan. '82	Two-str.	11.8/11.3	236	NA	NA	6
Kawasaki KDX250	July '81	Two-str.	9.9/11.0	248	24.3	7000	6
Kawasaki KDX175	Dec. '80	Two-str.	9.6/9.8	222	15.3	8500	6
Kawasaki KX125	Jan. '81	Two-str.	10.4/11.3	207	20.9	12000	6
Kawasaki KX250	Sept. '80	Two-str.	11.3/11.2	233	26.8	8000	5
Kawasaki KX420	July '80	Two-str.	11.0/11.3	250	34.0	7000	5
Maico 400 MI	April '80	Two-str.	12.3/12.0	233	35.5	7000	5
Maico 450 MI	April '80	Two-str.	12.3/12.0	236	37.0	7000	5
Suzuki PE400	Nov. '80	Two-str.	11.3/11.3	250	30.9	7000	5
Suzuki RM125X	June '81	Two-str.	10.8/11.7	205	20.7	11500	6
Suzuki RM250X	Oct. '81	Two-str.	10.5/11.3	219	NA	NA	5
Suzuki RM465X	Aug. '81	Two-str.	10.4/10.8	234	36.0	7000	5
Yamaha Pro-Tec 600	Nov. '79	Four-str.	10.5/10.1	262	46.2	6500	5
Yamaha TT250G	Aug. '80	Four-str.	8.8/7.5	242	17.7	8000	5
Yamaha YZ250G	March '80	Two-str.	11.2/11.6	217	29.6	8000	6
Yamaha IT465	May '81	Two-str.	10.0/11.4	247	38.1	6500	5
Yamaha YZ465H	Aug. '81	Two-str.	11.0/12.4	235	39.8	7000	5

*Horsepower shown is taken at the rear wheel and does not account for transmission losses between the engine and rear wheel. These results may differ from manufacturer's claims or from results obtained using a different dynamometer.

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R65	March '81	2C/G	14.16/92.1	110	423	45-50	133
BMW R100RS	May '81	2C/G	13.48/98.4	127	492	34-52	145
BMW R80 G/S	Nov. '81	2C/G	14.07/92.3	105	405	36-54	NA
H-D FXRS	Dec. '81	45-deg. 2D/F	13.92/93.1	109	594	40-47	124
H-D Tour Glide	Sept. '80	45-deg. 2D/F	15.58/83.9	108	785	35-44	161
Honda CB400T Hawk	March '80	2A/F	14.37/88.6	100	391	51-65	139
Honda GL500 Interstate	Aug. '81	80-deg. 2E/G	14.88/86.4	96	517	39-53	140
Honda CX500 Turbo	Sept. '81	80-deg. 2E/G	NA	136	549	NA	NA
Honda CB750F	June '81	4A/F	12.40/108.3	118	526	38-53	126
Honda CB750C	Nov. '80	4A/F	12.68/105.3	128	530	39-46	131
Honda CB900F	July '81	4A/F	12.21/111.1	141	547	41-47	130
Honda GL1100 Interstate	Aug. '81	4C/G	13.37/99.7	130	691	39-44	148
Honda CBX	May '81	6A/F	12.01/113.9	136	646	23-40	130
Honda CB1100R	Nov. '81	4A/F	NA	155	518	31-48	NA
Kawasaki KZ440D	Feb. '81	2A/H	14.59/89.1	107	383	56-64	135
Kawasaki KZ550	Sept. '80	4A/F	13.45/97.1	103	426	37-51	150
Kawasaki GPz550	Sept. '81	4A/F	12.97/101.7	119	449	52-63	149
Kawasaki KZ750	June '81	4A/F	12.43/108.2	128	471	38-60	128
Kawasaki KZ1000J	Feb. '81	4A/F	11.62/116.3	130	521	30-51	135
Kawasaki KZ1100	April '81	4A/G	11.62/117.6	140	559	38-44	NA
Kawasaki GPz1100	July '81	4A/F	11.44/118.6	133	538	38-47	158
Kawasaki KZ1300A GT	Sept. '80	6A/G	12.71/107.4	135	730	31-45	146
R.C. Turbo CB750F	Oct. '80	4A/F	11.99/113.8	NA	523	27-39	135
Suzuki GS450ST	May '80	2A/F	14.09/92.5	100	397	55-57	127
Suzuki GS550 Katana	Jan. '82	4A/F	NA	103	420	41	NA
Suzuki GS750EZ	Jan. '82	4A/F	12.01/109.1	127	519	34-49	127
Suzuki GS1000E	Aug. '80	4A/F	11.98/113.9	136	528	32-50	137
Suzuki GS1000G	Aug. '80	4A/G	12.34/110.8	139	564	30-51	141
Suzuki GS1000S Katana	Dec. '81	4A/F	11.40/118.7	141	525	33-51	129
Suzuki GS1100EX	July '81	4A/F	11.36/118.6	141	535	43-48	123
Suzuki GS1100 Twin Turbo	Oct. '81	4A/F	NA	172	548	NA	NA
Yamaha RD350LC	Dec. '80	Two-str. 2/AF	13.23/101.0	113	328	NA	126
Yamaha XJ550RH Seca	May '81	4A/F	12.99/101.7	121	418	44-55	119
Yamaha XJ650 Maxim I	June '80	4A/G	12.60/107.4	120	453	40-54	128
Yamaha XJ650	Nov. '80	4A/G	13.19/102.4	125	476	43-44	NA
Yamaha Seca 750	June '81	4A/G	12.26/108.0	128	495	44-56	134
Yamaha Virago	March '81	75-deg. 2D/G	13.28/99.8	105	481	47-51	132
Yamaha XV920	Oct. '81	75-deg. 2D/F	13.34/99.4	111	509	39-48	146
Yamaha XS1100LH	Jan. '81	4A/G	11.99/113.5	130	562	41-46	133

*A-Transverse Vertical, B-Vertical, (single-cylinder only), C-Horizontally Opposed, D-Tandem Vee, E-Transverse Vee, /F-Chain Final Drive, /G-Shaft Final Drive, /H-Belt Final Drive

Editorial

Consulting

Watch what you say...as it turns into production reality.

• The future of motorcycling is like the weather, right? Everyone talks on the subject, but no one does anything about it.

Wrong. Oh, so wrong.

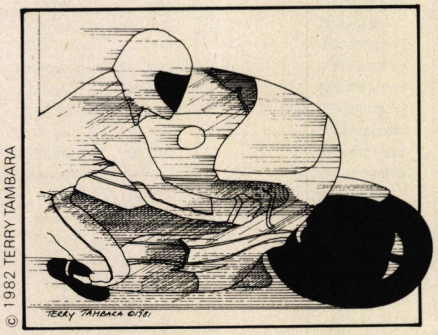
You do something about motorcycles and motorcycling every time you walk into a dealership or pick up a mail-order catalog from a motorcycle-related business. You shape the future. Every time you stimulate the motorcycle economy, either by infusing hard-earned dollars into the system or by simply asking for something that isn't available, you take steps to insure that your wants and needs in things motorcycle will be met in the future.

To put this staggering power into the most beneficial motion, try thinking of yourself as a kind of motorcycle product planner. In one very real sense you are, since scores of people are counting the ballots you cast whenever you vote with your wallet. Or, in some cases closer to the bone, when you refuse to vote.

As long as you're trying a little creative role-switching, think of the motorcycle dealerships that you frequent as direct links with the planning for all motorcycle-related products. It's easy enough to consider them that way because the people behind the counter have a vested interest in you. What you want, they want, and simply because you want it. And what they want, some sharp-eyed manufacturer will provide. The end result is a connected system of ballot-counters, with everyone paying attention. To you.

Now, if it was ever true that all that attention simply died on the vine, without ever penetrating far enough to reach the hands of the movers and shakers, it's not the case anymore. The motorcycle business is reacting to market pressures like never before. As in any other business, a buyer's market triggered by sluggish sales has forged an even stronger link between what you want and what you'll find eating space on the showroom floor in the future.

Of course, the dealership isn't the only step in this real-world moto-communication model. It's merely one of the first ones. But if you don't make use of every access channel, you've got no one to blame for tomorrow's hardware but yourself. Every input channel to the future of motorcycling should be used. And where are the other plug-ins to the planning process? You're staring at one of them right now. And if you're one of the hundreds of riders who responded to the *CG* letter-writing campaign promoted in the November 1980 issue, a campaign designed to let Yamaha know that the Euro-650 was the right motorcycle for the times, you know it for a fact. The proof of your efforts appears in the Coming Soon section of Guide Lines this month—but more to the point, you'll find it warming the linoleum in Yamaha dealerships across the country.



Chances are, though, that the Euro-650 won't be warming dealerships' floors for long. As a motorcycle capable of triggering a flood of enthusiast response, Yamaha's marketing wizards are betting that the Eurobike will also stimulate sales. No, rider response to the bike didn't *pressure* Yamaha into bringing in the 650; that's not the way to look at it. Instead, the tide of positive emotion directed to Yamaha provided some assurance that an untapped market existed for a bike *like* the XJ650. It was still up to Yamaha to listen to and interpret the message. The result you can see for yourself. And if you doubt that outside response had a hand in bringing the bike in, you're selling yourself short.

But don't count the Euro-650 as the exception that makes the rule. The list of supposedly forbidden fruit that suddenly became available is growing longer—if not daily, at least with each new model year. Suddenly, everyone is paying attention to what you want. Never before have the motorcycle product planners, researchers and marketing strategists watched the market with such care. Which makes this the time to get vocal and stay vocal. The men charged with stepping back from the crystal ball knowing the pulse of the riding population are listening, and listening hard. If you're smart—and more than a bit self-interested—you'll use it.

One of the prime ways to use all that buyer-watching fervor is to tell your dealer what you want—and what you wouldn't take on a bet. Another is to use any and all of the motojournals. As a matter of course, CYCLE GUIDE will pass over copies of your letters to the appropriate manufacturer, after deleting names and addresses to protect your privacy. Think of it as one more funnel that leads to the manufacturers' drawing boards. And use every magazine on the rack as a megaphone, while you're at it. Climb up on every letters column like a soapbox. Get your message straight, and keep broadcasting loud and clear.

Don't limit yourself to writing to magazines and to schmoozing with your dealer, either. If what you want isn't on the market, write to manufacturers. Better yet, send a telegram. These days you can just about be sure that your message won't end up in the hopper.

What all this doesn't add up to is a reasonable expectation that the motorcycle industry will drop existing projects to hop to your demands. You can't, for example, waltz into a dealership, drop a few loud hints that you'd really be interested in seeing a water-cooled, fuel-injected, inline eight with shaft drive and turbocharging, and then arrive the following week with your check in hand. Despite a heightened awareness on the part of the motorcycle business, and despite a seeming ability for a manufacturer to pop a new motorcycle out of the oven on command, it just doesn't happen that way. But even if you can't expect immediate gratification of your motorcycling fantasies and desires, it doesn't mean that no one is paying attention. And it doesn't mean that you ought to keep those whims to yourself.

The truth is, with all the effort going into market surveys, focus groups, tarot cards, divining rods and anything else that will semi-accurately prognosticate future buyer whims, you might as well consider yourself as an expert consultant. You are, after all, the only expert on what it is that *you* want. As an outside consultant for Motorcycling, Inc., you probably won't collect a paycheck on the first and the fifteenth, but the rewards will be regular. You'll get your payoff every time a motorcycle constructed with your interests in mind rolls off of the assembly line.

—Larry Works

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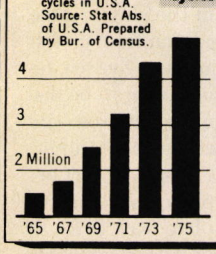

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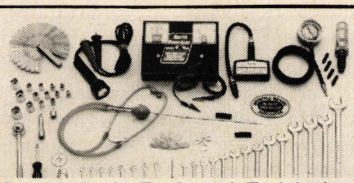

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Adjustments

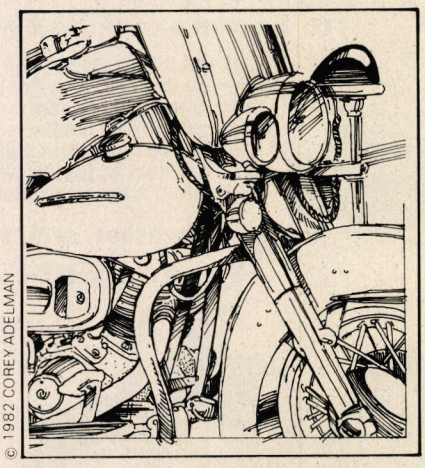
Cutting your bike some slack.

• If you've somehow gotten the impression that the external adjustments on a motorcycle are insignificant just because they're small and simple, guess what? You're wrong. Those sundry little threaded goodies found here and there are not as complex or intimidating as the collection of parts that click and whirr inside the engine, but in their own way they're just as important. Sometimes, in fact, how well those internal pieces can function is dependent on outside adjustments. And those adjustments always have a profound effect on the way a bike *feels*.

Take, for instance, the threaded adjusters found at or near the rider-controlled end of most cables found on a motorcycle (throttle cable, clutch cable and, on drum-braked models, front and rear brake cables or rods). Because they're right out in the open (and often don't even require any tools to use), they're either continually fiddled with (and frequently maladjusted) or else taken for granted and simply ignored altogether. But the ideal technique in dealing with external adjustments must, obviously, fall somewhere between these two extremes if the control systems are to function as intended.

The first thing to remember about cable-end adjusters is that they don't actually adjust the components that they're connected to but that they merely adjust the freeplay in the cable that operates those components. Freeplay is, of course, the slack that's in a cable when its control device (twistgrip, hand lever, foot pedal, etc.) is not being used. Freeplay *must* be present in all control cables and brake rods (and hydraulic brake systems, as well, although many bikes have adjustment provisions only on the rear master cylinder and not at the front one) to insure that the system they control is not in partial use when it's supposed to be *out* of use. Conversely, having *too* much freeplay can result in the hand/foot control being unable to operate its system soon enough, far enough or both.

Not having sufficient freeplay in the throttle cable, for example, can cause the engine to idle too quickly, or to return to idle rpm too slowly; worse yet, since changing the radius of any bend in a control cable also changes the relationship between the cable's outer sheath and its inner wire, and since the bends in the throttle cable change somewhat as the handlebar is steered from side to side, insufficient freeplay in the cable can cause an idling engine to rev up when the front end is turned one way or the other. And that, friends, can be a dangerous condition.



© 1982 COREY ADELMAN

If the throttle-cable freeplay is too *great*, however, no such danger exists, but the twistgrip will have a lot of annoying, useless movement between closed throttle and open throttle. In some cases this excess freeplay could even make it impossible for the twistgrip to open the throttles all the way, thus limiting the maximum performance of the engine.

Similarly, the effectiveness of the front brake can be inhibited if the hand lever has too much freeplay. The lever will bottom-out, either on the fingers that the rider has remaining on the twistgrip if he uses the two-fingered braking technique, or on the grip itself if he does not. The latter condition also can keep the twistgrip from snapping closed if the brake lever fouls it during a hard stop. At the other extreme, too *little* freeplay can cause the brake to drag continuously, usurping engine power and overheating the brake to the point of total ineffectiveness. And since the bend in the brake cable changes as the fork moves up and down, too little play can cause the brake to engage and possibly even lock up as the front wheel passes over bumps.

At the opposite end of the handlebar, the clutch, too, can have problems if its cable freeplay isn't properly maintained. Too little play can cause the clutch to slip and, ultimately, burn up simply because a too-taut cable tends to keep the clutch right at the very point of disengagement while the bike is being ridden. And even if the clutch doesn't slip then, it just might once the clutch (and all of the engine internals, as well) heats up and expands enough to alter the relationships between its component parts. Further, too little freeplay tends to require the clutch lever to move a long way from the handgrip before the clutch engages, perhaps enough to be uncomfortable or inconvenient for the rider.

Too much freeplay in the clutch cable causes the opposite condition from clutch slip: clutch drag. All clutches, you see, require their outer pressure plate to be displaced a certain distance away from the other plates during disengagement; otherwise, there still will be enough contact between the pressure plate and the remainder of the clutch-plate pack to cause the aforementioned drag. And excess cable freeplay can result in this condition because too much of the hand lever's overall travel was used up by the freeplay. The result: The bike will want to creep forward when it's at a stop with the engine running in gear and the clutch is supposedly disengaged; the gearbox will clunk loudly and the bike will lunge forward when it is put into gear; the idle speed will *seem* too low when in actuality it may be all right but clutch drag is slowing it down; gearchanging will be notchy and abrupt; and the clutch plates, gear dogs and shift forks all will wear out prematurely.

Let's not forget about foot controls, either, specifically the rear brake. It makes no difference if the brake is cable- or rod-operated, or even if it's a hydraulic disc; too little freeplay will cause the brake to drag and too much can result in catastrophies both big and small. Depending upon the design of the bike, you might have to push the pedal down far enough that it hits something that will prevent the brake from working—the muffler, the footpeg bracket or, if you're turning hard right, even the *ground*.

So unless you've got money to burn, you probably don't want to incur the kinds of problems discussed here. You ride motorcycles, presumably, because you enjoy them, so it makes no sense at all to do it on a bike that's less enjoyable than it could be if a few anyone-can-do-it adjustments were performed according to the recommendations in the owner's manual. And the fact is that just as a car seems to work and ride better when its windows are sparkling-clean, so does a bike seem to work and ride better when its controls are properly adjusted. —*David Dewhurst*

IF OTHER MOTORCYCLES WERE BUILT LIKE THIS THEY'D BE EXPENSIVE TOO.

For every motorcycle BMW carefully builds, Suzuki cranks out 45. Yamaha turns out 68. And Honda, a startling 86.

The reason for BMW's strikingly limited production? A passion for extraordinary engineering and hand craftsmanship that high-speed assembly-line techniques simply cannot satisfy.

Each and every BMW frame, for example, is welded entirely by hand instead of machine. It is aligned and scrutinized by a single craftsman and then stamped with his personal seal.

Onto this steady foundation are mounted some of the most precisely tooled components ever to grace a production motorcycle:

A driveshaft, for example, so perfectly formed as to not require a single counterbalancing weight. Cylinders and crankcases that are machined to such infinitesimal tolerances that gaskets are wholly unnecessary.

To insure its durability every critical component on a BMW is actually X-rayed to determine its stress value.

To increase maneuverability these parts are, wherever possible, made of expensive lightweight alloys instead of steel or iron. Culminating in a motorcycle which, model for model, is the lightest in its class.

And not surprisingly, the most expensive in its class. Ranging between $3,600–$7,300, excluding local shipping charges and state taxes.

The rewards? According to Cycle magazine "...high-mileage, years-old BMW's retain their taut, solid feel when lesser motorcycles have long since gotten loose and rattly."

And according to the NADA's motorcycle handbook, BMW's also retain a higher percentage of their original purchase price than any other motorcycle.

Which provides the BMW owner with the singular satisfaction of sitting not only on a superior machine, but on a superior investment as well.

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THE LEGENDARY MOTORCYCLES OF GERMANY.

BMW

SUZUKI.
PERFORMANCE ABOVE ALL

RM-125

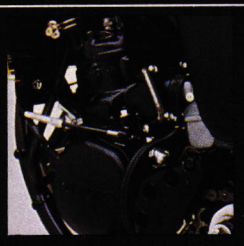
Here it comes. The unbeatable RM-125. The winningest 125cc motocrosser in the world.

For 1982, watch out! It's refined, and even better. We've given it an all new, more powerful Full Reed engine, side-pull throttle, and a folding gear shift lever. And, we've taken away a few pounds.

What's not new about the RM-125 is the beautifully responding Full Floater suspension, water cooling and its reputation for being a winner.

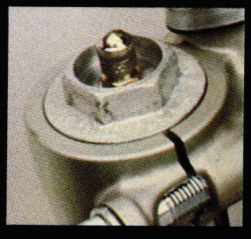
It's been world champ for seven straight years. 1982 should be no exception.

New Full Reed engine:
Offers even more power throughout the powerband, and water cooling.



Full Floater system:
The most effective rear suspension available. Keeps you straight and smooth like no other.

New front air forks:
Now lighter and stronger
for 1982.



SUZUKI®

Thompson at Large

To BMW or Not to BMW

Beemer me up, Scotty.

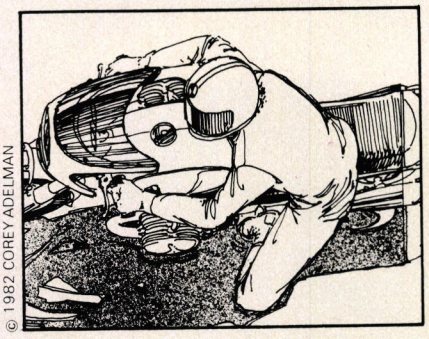
• I just got off another BMW. This time, it was the blazing-red R100RS we tested in our Sport Touring issue (May, '81), and it upheld the Beemer tradition for me. Which is: I get on the bike wondering whether they've fixed the things that drove me crazy last time I rode one (you know: lousy side- and centerstands, rear-end jacking, lumpy idle, carbs that bang your shins when you try to shift), and then, within about a hundred miles, I get used to the same old things again. But that's not the end of the cycle. After I get used to its idiosyncrasies, I go through a weeks-long period of always managing to ride it home. Then, after a thousand miles or so, I begin to get belligerent when somebody asks for the key. Finally, when they pry it from me I realize that I just flat love the thing. This has held true for the last three I rode—the R100RS, R80 G/S and R65. So there's definitely a pattern emerging here.

In fact, there's so clearly something going on between Beemers and me that I was going to spend this space trying to define it—"it" being that unique quality the Black Forest bombers have. BMW-ness. On the way to writing about it, though, something happened. My recent-issue scan turned up a pretty meager crop of BMW pieces. Especially BMW stories that would help in defining BMW-ness. Hmmm, I thought. And dug further back into the morgue of old issues.

Not much, in spades.

What's going on here? I thought. I mean, here's one of the most heavily mythologized motorcylces in history—practically a German Harley-Davidson in design-fanaticism terms—one that's duked-it-out with the Japanese technomarvels, survived, stubbornly clung to a heretofore heretical philosophy ("Power? Adequate. Weight? Low. Handling? Superb. Price? Astronomical.") and yet not much has been *said* about it. Repeat: What's going on here?

Laziness, that's what. Yours *and* ours. The way I figure it, we're both a little too dazzled by those technomarvels from the Orient to keep a clear focus on what a Beemer means. It's understandable, of course—the flow of technomarvels being what it's been recently, the motomags have been hard-pressed just to keep up with road tests, and you guys have been hard-pressed just to figure out whether



© 1982 COREY ADELMAN

the latest technomarvel belongs in your garage or not. And in the face of turbocharging, fuel injection, Pro-Link, Uni-Trak, magic forks, 10-second 550s and the like, who can be blamed for kind of ignoring expensive but simple and familiar hardware? Again: both of us.

I don't really care if you're as susceptible to BMW-ness as I am or not, the point is this: History is littered with the corpses of manufacturers and motorcycles killed off not by lousy engineering but by sudden and sometimes inexplicable shifts in buyer tastes and loyalties. But here's the crucial part: Maybe, unlike Chrysler, some of these bikes didn't actually deserve to die—maybe it was simply our ignorance and laziness that cut short our options. And cut them short this process has; besides building a mountain of moldy marques for us to restore and revere, what has the gradual elimination of manufacturer-choice done for us lately?

This is not an argument for Socialist Motorcycling, or an ad for BMW. It's simply a startled recognition that one day we might wake up to find all our bikes made by a single MegaCorp. Fine, you might argue—what do I care, if they're quality items built for my tastes at a price I can afford? Well, maybe you don't care—today. But what happens when you outgrow their product? What happens when you get a yen for a whacko bike you never thought you might want—say, instead of that 24-valve short-fuse rocket with the sissy bar you've got now, something austerely simple, uncommonly light, beautifully crafted and outrageously expensive?

Ah—here you are in BMW-land. Or Ducati-land, or even Harley-land. But what if you're there and *they* aren't?

Now you see what happened on the way to my story on BMW-ness. We don't spend enough time or effort on understanding the whackos, you and I. As motorcyclists, we pride ourselves (either overtly or secretly, depending on self-honesty) on being a little bit different from all those folks who seek the narrow comforts of Plushbottom Buicks, and so we *talk* whacko a lot. We talk, in fact, all too much. We've mythologized bikes like Beemers to the point where most of us can't even get on one without missing the machine for the myths.

This can have dire consequences, because our myths become information, and information is power. Consider: You get your information about your favorite machinery in only three ways. First, from an owner or owner's-pal. Second, from product advertising. And third, from special-interest magazines.

What happens if all of those avenues of throughput are jammed with myth-static? Plenty—the real value of the machine (that is, what is it built to do and how well does it do it?) gets lost in the noise. This can easily happen with a BMW, for instance, because, first, the company's market-share having shrunk in the last few years, your chances of running into an owner lessens each year. Second, maybe even the advertising agency figures that myth is the easiest way to sell product, so it capitalizes on it rather than attempting the difficult job of defining, in a single page, the origins, philosophy and details of a given bike. And third, if the motomags are buried in a blizzard of technomarvel tests, sparing only a few pages a year for evaluating the marginal motorcycles, it's easy for them unwittingly to underscore the myths, too—especially when the machine doesn't change much year-to-year, as indeed BMWs do not.

I don't know whether in BMW's case this will add up to the eventual disappearance of its bikes or not. But I do know that everytime I get to liking them again, most—and I mean *most*—of my bike-freak friends (including, alas, some motomag staffers) act as though I've lost what remains of my marble collection.

I used to argue with them, but I've given up. They wore me out. And that worries me, too, because now all that will open their minds is a thousand miles on a Beemer—and there seem to be fewer of *them* to go around every year.

—Steve Thompson

Stay warm as toast

Rider Magazine says: "The Wheels of Man Grand Touring suit is without doubt the warmest riding suit we have ever used."

If it had been raining, they would have said it was the driest, too.

And no wonder. For no other suit is made like ours.

First, we take 200/400 denier nylon, coat it with urethane, fill it with 7.5 polyester, and quilt it.

Next we triple-roll and hand-seal critical seams.

Then we put in huge, 5″-wide leg gussets; Velcro-sealed flaps; two-way zippers; nylon-shielded knit collars; storm cuffs; and "the largest wind flap" *Rider* has ever seen.

You want warm? You want dry? You want Wheels of Man.

You'll find them in one-piece suits or separates, for men and women, at motorcycle dealers everywhere.

For more information, contact Wheels of Man, 11135 Vanowen, North Hollywood, CA 91605

wheels of man

THE SUZUKI SUPER SALE IS ON!

Now, get the best deal ever on Suzuki streetbikes!

See your local Suzuki dealer and take advantage of the incredible Suzuki Super Sale.

You'll save big bucks on four of Suzuki's most popular 1981 street machines.

Suzuki's already low prices have just hit bottom!

This offer is good only through participating Suzuki dealers in the 48 contiguous United States.

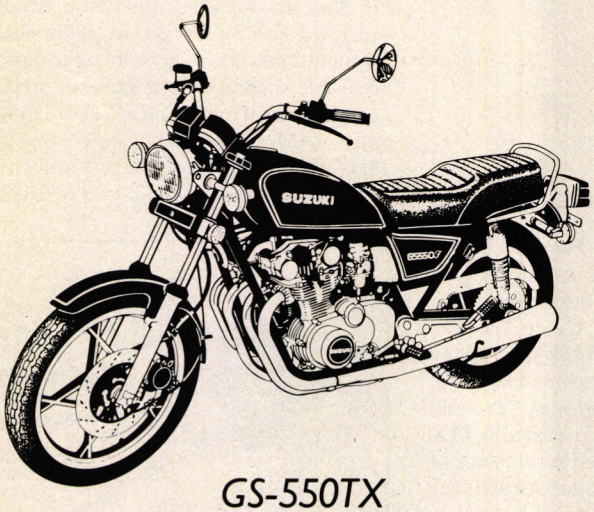
Plus, you can't get a better warranty on any other motorcycle!

SUZUKI®

Warranty offered only in the 48 contiguous United States and Alaska. Refer to U.S. Suzuki GS Model "Limited Warranty Policy" at Suzuki dealerships. A similar warranty is offered in Canada.

~~$2399~~

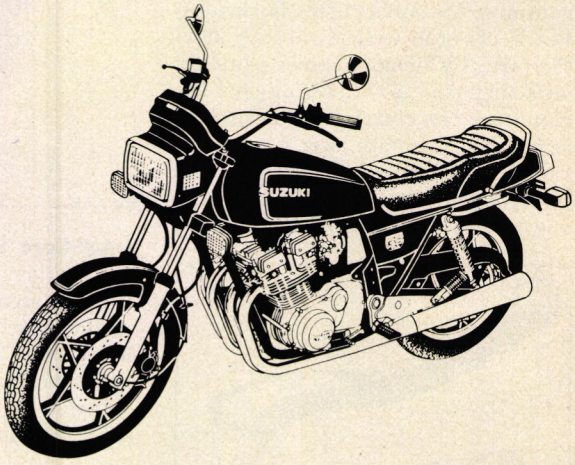
$1999*



GS-550TX

~~$2999~~

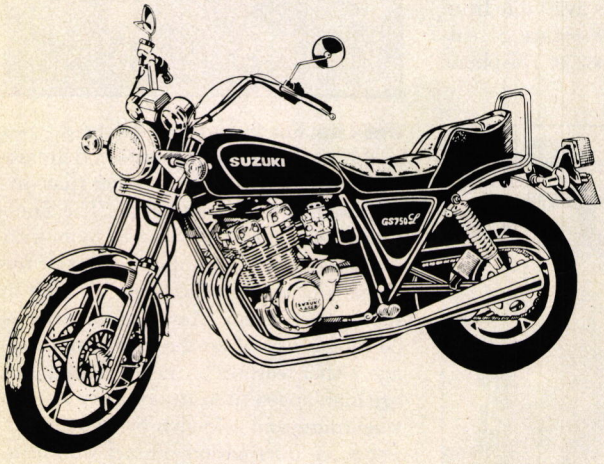
$2699*



GS-750EX

~~$3099~~

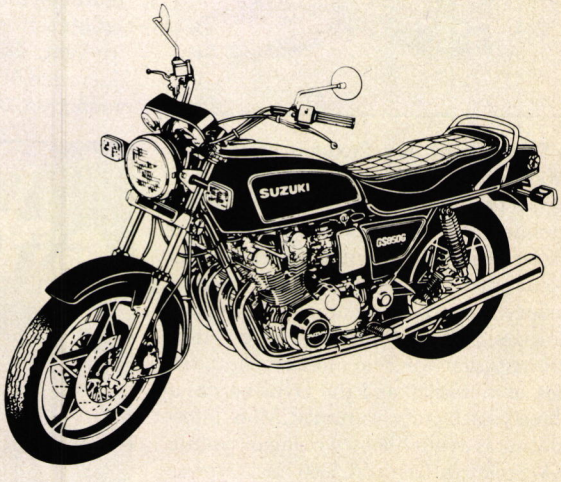
$2799*



GS-750LX

~~$3349~~

$2999*



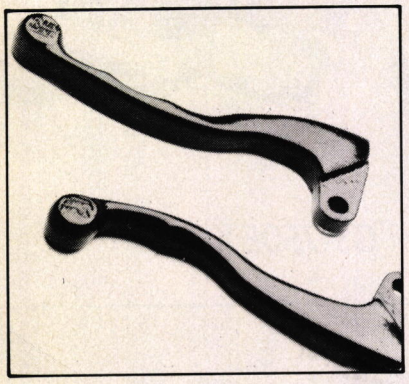
GS-850GX

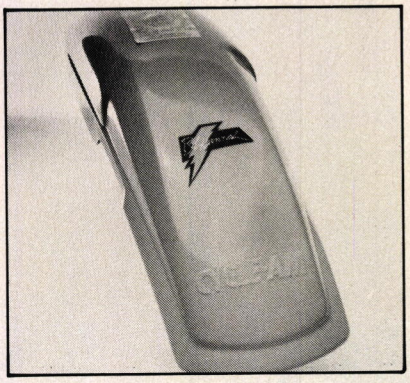
*Manufacturer's new suggested retail price.

Motomart

Winter window shopping.

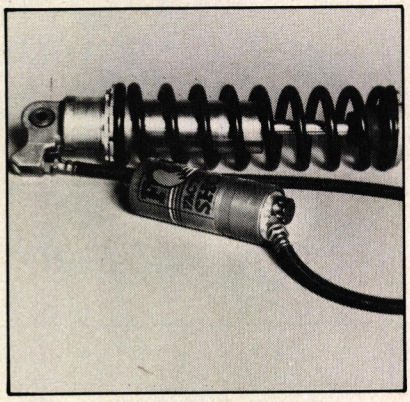
Short Stuff: Sun Line, the company that started the short-lever trend in the dirt world with the DeHandlers, has introduced a new model. DeHandler-Pro levers are shaped with indentations for your fingers and are made of a malleable aluminum alloy. The surface of the DeHandler-Pro is covered with a smooth electrostatically bonded epoxy paint for durability. And as with the original DeHandlers, the clutch lever is slightly longer than the brake lever, but still unlikely to touch ground in a fall. Sun Line, Incorporated, Dept. CG, 7045 Darby Avenue, Reseda, California 91335.

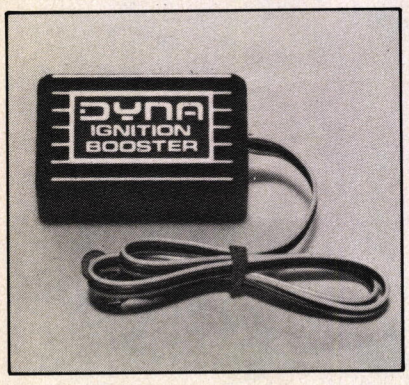




Small-Bore Hurricane Fender: Cycle-Am has just expanded its line of Bob Hannah signature fenders to include smaller machines. The Cycle-Am rear fender carries a one-year guarantee against breakage and comes in blue, green, red, white or yellow to fit most 100cc and 125cc machines. The Hurricane MX model carries a suggested retail price of $15.95 while the Enduro fender sells for $23.95. To find out more or to obtain a copy of the $1.00 catalog, write to Cycle-Am, Dept. CG, 23954 Craftsman Road, Calabasas, California 91302. The phone number is (213) 888-2016.

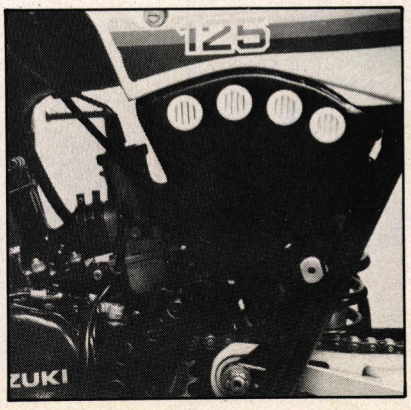
Shock Talk: Moto-X Fox has a way to give stock Suzuki Floater shocks adjustable compression damping. The work makes RM shocks comparable to the Moto-X Fox Twin-Clicker shock, which is offered for other single-shock machines. For $135, less than half the cost of a new shock, the Full Floater gets a steel-braided hose and a new reservoir that has an easily accessible knob to change damping on the compression stroke. The shock must be sent to Moto-X Fox, Dept CG, 520 McGlincy Lane, Campbell, California 95008. For information call (408) 371-1221.





A Fresh Point: KV Products has just introduced the Dyna Ignition Booster, a device that wires into motorcycle or automobile ignitions to produce a claimed faster, more-consistent spark. It reduces point current to a fraction of normal to reduce burnt points and eliminate condensers. Sealed aluminum construction prevents damage from moisture, heat, oil, dirt or vibration, and the Dyna carries a three-year factory warranty. More information is available by writing or calling KV Products, Dept. CG, 1060 East Cypress Street, Covina, California 91724; (213) 967-3786.

Breathe Easy: Many of today's high-revving motocrossers suffer from the same ailment. They don't breathe well enough. That's why Pro-Vent has introduced louvered one-inch-diameter vents to fit virtually any airbox. The vents provide increased airflow at a fraction of the cost of an entirely new airbox. Higher revs and quicker throttle response are the claimed results of the $8.95 kit, which includes eight plastic vents and is available from Pro-Vent, Dept. CG, 1309 State Street, Marysville, Washington 98270. The phone number is (206) 659-3205.



Trav-Lite: For the camping-oriented types in the two-wheel set, Continental Industries has produced a tent/trailer that can be towed behind a motorcycle. The Trav-Lite unfolds into a 5'2"-by-8'8" room with a 6½-foot ceiling, and can be used for sleeping or dining. And when it's time to hit the road again, Trav-Lite can provide 20 square feet of on-the-road cargo storage. Other features of the 310-pound unit are high-speed tires, heavy-duty welded steel frame and a 78-inch-by-48-inch bed. For more information contact Continental Industries, Dept. CG, 301 West Rising Street, Davison, Michigan 48423.

GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY DAVID DEWHURST

COMING SOON

• Yamaha is proving that you don't need sheer size to make an exciting motorcycle. Indeed, the two most mouthwatering goodies in Yamaha's 1982 bag-of-tricks would only displace **1200cc** if they were joined together. But size isn't everything, especially when you have a turbocharger to blow things out of proportion. Yamaha has taken its Euro-650 motor and fed it with the tiniest turbo ever built. The Mitsubishi unit is even smaller than Honda's IHI turbo, and Yamaha doesn't rely on the complexities of fuel injection, like Big Red. The **Seca Turbo's** special CV carbs can also draw air past a large reed valve in the inlet system, bypassing the turbo and eliminating any lag when the turbine slows.

Just as impressive as the promised performance is the swoopy **styling** that sets the Turbo apart from any other Seca. An almost all-enclosing fairing combines with a styled tank and seat to make the new Seca hard to miss.

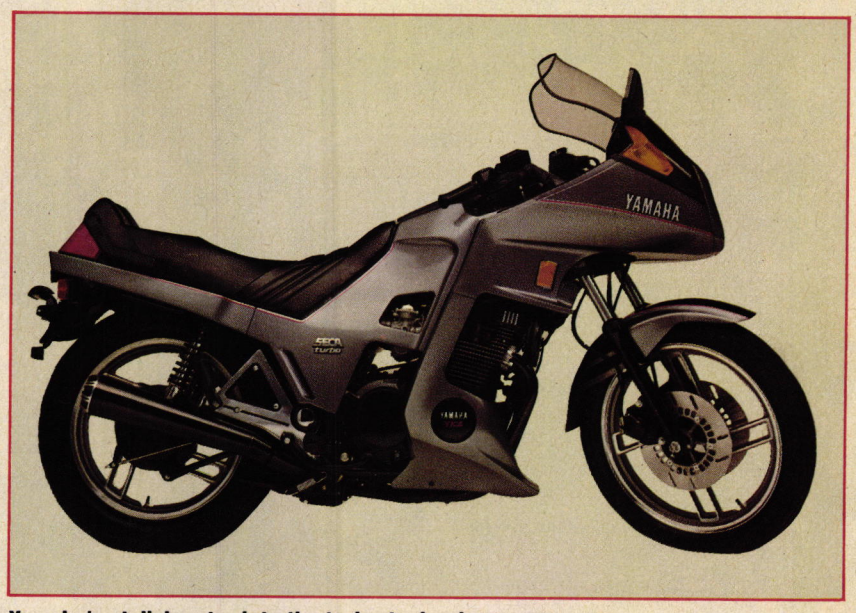
• The XJ550RJ is a beautiful **Vision** too. Under its angular good looks lurks a mechanical mini-monster that pumps out a claimed 64 horsepower from its water-cooled vee-twin cylinders. A new two-barrel **downdraft** carburetor and four valves per cylinder insure some exciting performance, while a counterbalancer keeps the 70-degree vee smooth. And innovations don't stop inside the motor. The shaft-drive bike has Monoshock suspension at the rear and a trailing-axle fork in front. You'll even find an **adjustable** handlebar and a new angular instrument pod.

• Vision styling can also be found on the new **Seca 400** twin. Yamaha has combined the angular looks and Monoshock suspension of the 550 with an all-new DOHC, counterbalanced vertical twin. Six gearbox ratios pump power to new cast wheels and tubeless tires on this downsized street performer.

• For those who prefer a Custom look to their bikes, the new 400 also comes in **Maxim** styling. A stepped seat, teardrop tank and spoke wheels give the mini-custom the required look.

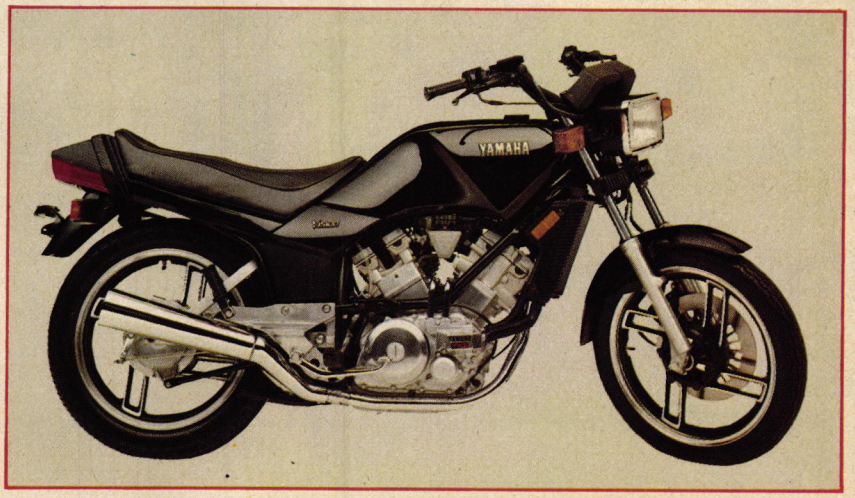
• But if you want a little more grunt than a 400cc twin can provide, Yamaha has a twin-cylinder alternative. The familiar big-inch vee-twin XV920 is now available in Custom guise. Sharing its shaft-drive bottom-end with the 750, the **920 Virago** also gets increased engine performance to make it king of the top-gear roll-on. And to keep track of your rapid progress, Yamaha has given the 920 Virago an entirely digital CYCOM instrument system. Large **LCD** numbers give speed in mph and one press of a button gives the equivalent speed in kph. Next to the speedo is an LCD representation of a conventional tachometer face, which responds almost instantly to indicate changes in engine speed. Yet another button on the square dash recalibrates the tach to a **2000-rpm** scale for fine adjustment of the engine idle.

• The sport-touring version of the XV920 is the only large-displacement non-custom model left in the Yamaha line now that the **1100cc** four-cylinder motor only comes wrapped in a Maxim package. But the Eleven has more than styling to offer. **YICS** induction insures improved engine performance, while new suspension keeps the complete package balanced. A damping-adjustable air fork is matched to air shocks at the rear. And if you need any more adjustments, the handlebar also can be moved into a



Yamaha's stylish entry into the turbo-technology race

Giving a 650-four power it wouldn't normally aspire to.



The vee-twin Vision is looking to take the mid-size sport market

A water-cooled warrior with enough technology to win the war.

Continued

Of course the XR500R is the strongest bike in its class. It's had more exercise.

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. Designed for off-road, operator use only. State laws affecting off-road motorcycles vary. XRs may not meet noise regulations in some states. Installation of high-performance parts may increase XRs decibel rating above legal levels in some states. Check local laws before installation.

This year, there'll be more big, muscular enduro bikes around than ever. But the problem with some of them is that nobody has had a chance to see them really work out.

That's not the case with the 1982 Honda XR500R. It's already proven itself fit for competition by giving the competition fits for three long years.

Its 498 cc OHC single has been around. Not only enduro courses, but flat tracks as well. Putting behind it countless miles of the hardest riding imaginable.

With our exclusive reed-valve induction and a four-valve Pentroof™ head, it pumps out 35 horsepower. Since it's a four-stroke, you don't rely on the clutch and the shifter to find your power. Just turn the throttle for an instant dose of its legendary torque.

But even though the XR500R can fly, it'll still spend more time on the ground than the competition. Exclusive Pro-Link™ rear suspension provides soft spring and damping rates for smaller bumps and progressively firmer rates as the bumps get bigger. To get the power to the ground, where it belongs. And up front dual Syntallic™ bushings cut friction in those big air-adjustable forks.

These are the kinds of refinements that separate the XR500R from its competition.

Ride it and you'll be in great shape to win an enduro. Riding anything else is an exercise in futility.

HONDA

FOLLOW THE LEADER

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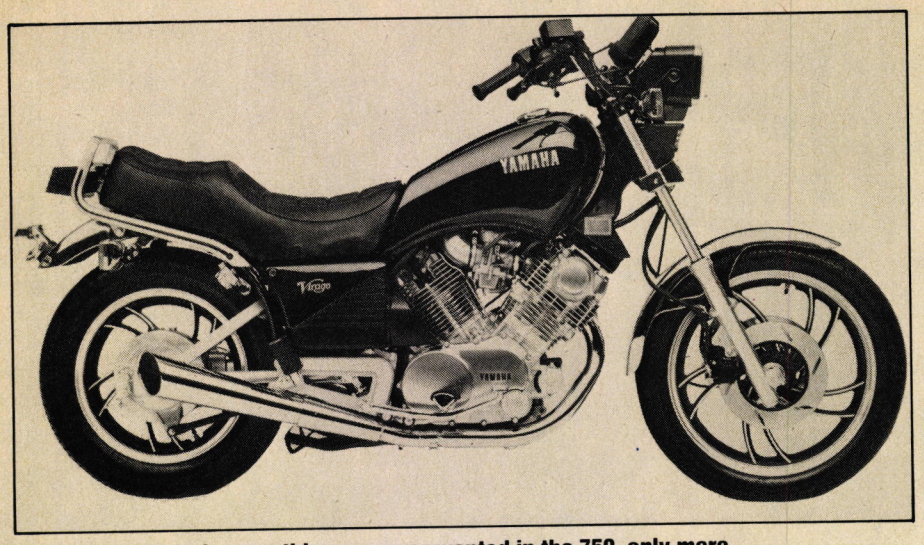
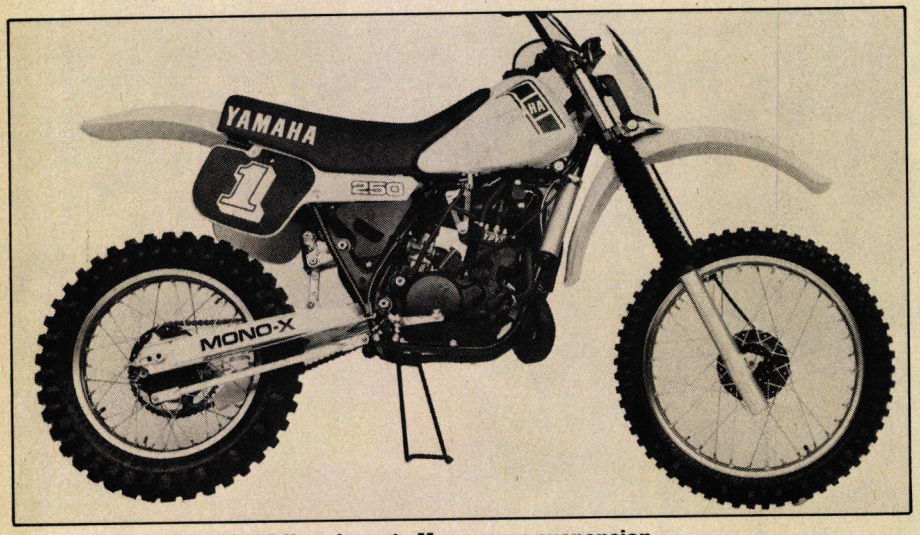


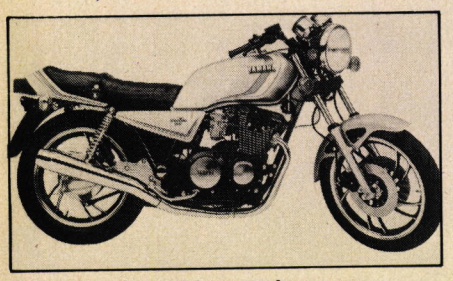
The XV920 Virago is everything you ever wanted in the 750, only more

Yamaha taxes a large-caliber shot at the custom market.



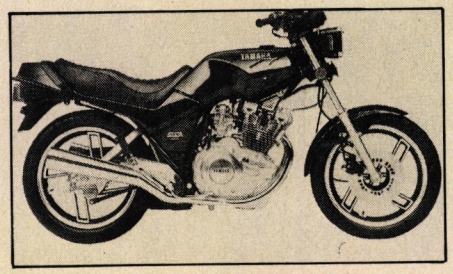
The all-new LCYZYPVS250 Yamaha gets Monocross suspension

The new world champ is water-cooled and power-valved for '82.



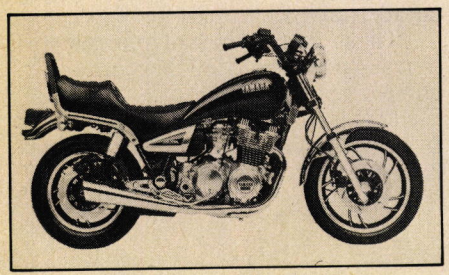
The style of sport tourers to come

The Euro-650 gets an American visa.



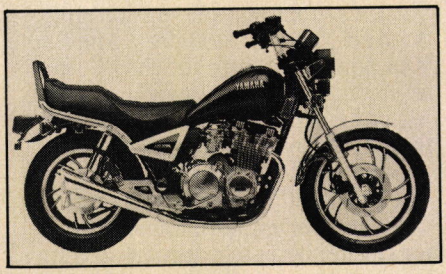
An all new Monoshock 400cc twin

Designed for the Seca small riders.



A custom look for the Eleven

Maxim styling taken to XS.



Multi-positioned 750 Maxim

Adjusts to the needs of its rider.

multitude of positions.

• Like a baby brother of the 1100 Maxim, the 750 custom-styled Maxim shares all the 1100's adjustable pieces with one unique feature as an added **extra**. To make its riding position even more tunable, the 750 Maxim has adjustable footpegs and controls.

• But you still can't get the Maxim footpegs all the way back into a semi-racer position. Which is where the **Seca 650** comes in. Brought across the Atlantic with few changes, the Euro-650 has the flat-bar looks and shaft-drive practicality of a long-distance **European**-style sport tourer.

• If you're interested in something that needs a little less pavement, the all-new **XT550** might just boil your blood. There is nothing too unusual about the 558cc four-valve top end or the counterbalanced lower half. Not even Monoshock suspension will raise too many eyebrows, but dual-carburetor induction probably will. With a small slide/needle carb feeding one inlet valve and a mechanically linked **CV carb** fueling the other at higher speed, the XT550 has the right amount of fuel for any situation.

• If the thought of 558cc turns your knuckles white, Yamaha also has an XT200. It shares the same curvy red styling with the 550, but the diminutive **200cc** single should be docile enough for anyone.

• But if even 200cc is a little too much, there is always the counterbalanced **XT125** single. Like a pocket-sized version of its bigger brothers, the 125cc motor has a five-speed gearbox and is housed in a Monoshock chassis.

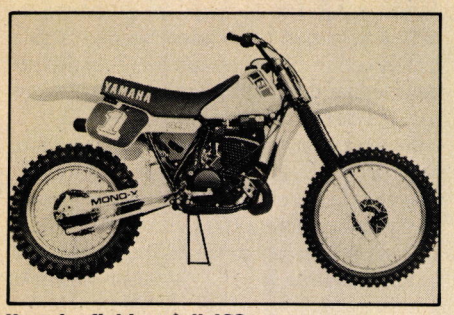
• Taking single-shock suspension one step further, Yamaha's four biggest motocrossers all share the latest **Monocross** rear suspension. A short vertical link and a cast aluminum rocker arm give the bikes rising-rate suspension just like the single-shock competition. But one major edge Yamaha has over the opposition is cubic capacity. The new Open-class bike now displaces a whopping **490cc** and gets even more grunt from Yamaha's patented YEIS induction system. With so much power it's not surprising that the big YZ has only a **four**-speed gearbox.

• You get a full five ratios inside the new water-cooled YZ250, which also has Yamaha's **patented** mechanical valve in the exhaust port. And as well as sharing Monocross rear suspension, the YZ250 uses the same larger front fork found on the Open bike.

• Like the 250, the YZ125 has the Power Valve System **(YPVS)** in the exhaust port. There is also a new exhaust and air cleaner to insure healthy horsepower. Suspension too, is up-rated with improved fork and Monocross suspension, which features adjustable compression and rebound damping.

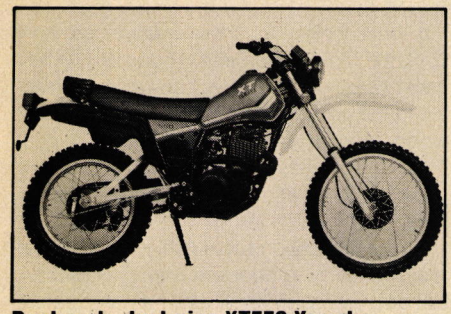
• Even Yamaha's new YZ100 has rising-rate Monocross suspension and the **integrated** seat-and-tank unit featured on the factory bikes.

• And while the latest YZ80 retains the original Monoshock suspension, it gains the latest **watercooling** technology for its mini-motor. There is even a YEIS canister to improve mid-range performance on the micro-motocrosser.



Yamaha fields a full 490

The Open-class ante is upped.

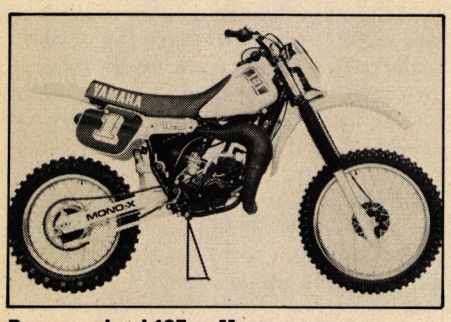


Dual-carb, dual-pipe XT550 Yamaha

Doubling-up for the dual-purpose rider.

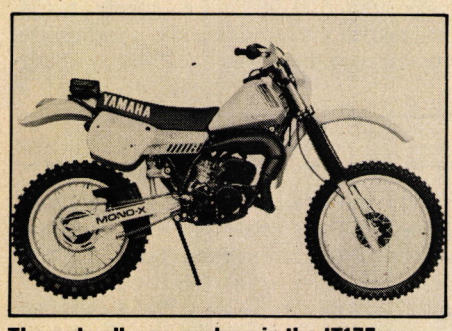
All new XT200 dual-purpose four-stroke

Can it excel in a mini-thumper market?



Power-valved 125cc Monocrosser

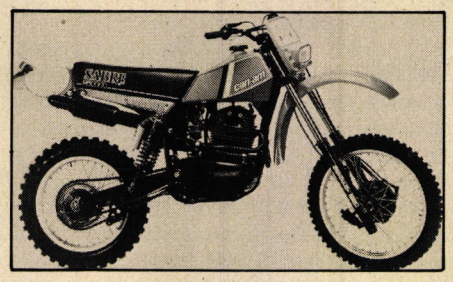
Monoshock finally rises to a new rate.



The only all-new enduro is the IT175

Yamaha's small wonder for the woods.

• For older kids who don't like riding around in circles, Yamaha has a **revamped** IT175 that has a new chassis with Monocross suspension and improved ground clearance. The motor, too, gets some help with a YEIS canister to boost midrange out in the woods.



Canadian four-stroke 500cc thumper

With its heart in the Austrian Alps.

• While you're out dodging the trees, look out for five new **Can-Am** enduro models. They're not hard to miss in their orange-and-black livery. Redesigned Qualifiers still come in familiar 175cc, 250cc and 400cc sizes, but the Canadian firm has added a **125cc** model and a full-blown 500. The rotary-valve 125 shares most parts with its bigger cousin, but the 500 is a radical departure for Can-Am. The **Sabre** uses a new four-valve and counterbalanced four-stroke motor pumping a claimed 40 horsepower through a five-speed gearbox. A 42mm Marzocchi fork and Ohlins shocks give the bike more than 12 inches of wheel travel at both ends. *–David Dewhurst*

FEDERAL CASES

• In northern California, the highway patrol has hit on a novel method of enforcing the double nickel. When speeders are stopped, they are given–in addition to a citation–a pair of **dice** with fives on all sides as a reminder of the speed limit. Given the arbitrary way in which the law occasionally is enforced, maybe handing out real dice would be more appropriate.

• With a good roll, however, those dice may become museum relics soon. Opposition to the federally mandated 55-mph national speed limit was built into the 1980 Republican Party platform. Now the NHTSA has taken what could be a first step toward abolition of that law. Under a recent decision by the federal agency, **speedometers** will no longer be limited to 85-mph maximum readings, nor will they require special markings for 55.

• More good news from Washington. Federal Highway Administration guidelines encouraging the promotion of **commuter**-oriented use of motorcycles have been approved by the executive branch. 275 metropolitan areas nationwide will be affected.

• California's Department of Transportation already has taken steps to make motorcycle commuting more efficient. Caltrans has begun opening carpool freeway ramps to bikes. Until the **"MOTORCYCLES OK"** sign goes up by your favorite highway entrance, however, riders who use the carpool lane still can be cited. If this pro-

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gram works smoothly, Caltrans will seek to open carpool lanes on freeways to motorcycles.

• Also encouraging is the recent proclamation signed by Arkansas' governor making that state the fifth to officially declare a motorcycle **awareness** week. Illinois, Ohio, Oregon and Wisconsin are the others.

• And in Oregon, Senate Bill 864 has become law. Schools and groups providing driver education can now also offer rider training and receive **reimbursement** for their costs. Fees charged for driver's license issuances and renewals provide the funds.

• There could be more joy **off-road**, too. The National Park Service, which manages 81.5 million acres throughout the US, will seek to promote better trail designs for off-road vehicles through a technical assistance program.

• But there are clouds above those silver linings. The Senate Commitee on Energy and Natural Resources is considering legislation that will designate 2 million acres of California land as **wilderness.** This could lead to the closure of many areas in the Sequoia and Inyo National Forests to off-road vehicle enthusiasts.

• And at the local level, California's San Luis Obispo County is seeking a **ban** on **ORV** use in the Pismo Beach area, long popular with off-road riders. County authorities must get the approval of the California Coastal Planning Commission. Interested parties can make their feelings known to the CCPC, 631 Howard St., 4th Floor, San Francisco, California 94105.

• Turning to numbers, we find that the latest MSF figures show that although motorcycle registrations rose 6 percent in 1980 over the previous year, motorcycle **accidents** decreased by 0.5 percent. Unfortunately, fatalities rose by 5.1 percent.

• According to the NHTSA, the Motorcycle Operator Licensing Plan–which tests knowledge of information in a 35-page Operator's Manual, and riding skills on an off-street course–can lower those accident figures. **The Plan** has been shown to reduce accidents by 15-21 percent for motorcyclists following it, as compared to those taking the standard tests. Forty-thousand license applicants provided the data for the federally funded project.

• Harley-Davidson thinks it has a way to reduce accidents, too. The company has petitioned the NHTSA to permit **modulated** headlights as a factory option. Under the current Federal Motor Vehicle Standard 108, such pulsating beams may not be permissible.

• If a good safety idea is pulsating in your head, here's a chance for **fame and money**. Individuals and non-profit organizations will receive several million dollars in grants from the NHTSA for innovative safety concepts. The program will be for one year only. *–Tash Matsuoka*

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THE GOOD FIGHT.

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The Bikers of America are taking on the fight against Muscular Dystrophy. And we need you on our side. Muscular Dystrophy is a disease with no known cure. The way it is now, many kids who should grow up to ride—won't. But you have a chance to help change that, by joining in the "Bikers of America" fight against MD.

There will be fund-raising rallies, runs, parades, ride-ins, and other events all across America that you can participate in.

For details, see your local Harley-Davidson® dealer, or write "Bikers of America Fight MD," P. O. Box 653, Milwaukee, Wisc. 53201. We'll send you information on how you or your club can get involved.

Come on out and join the fight against MD. It's a good cause, a good way to do something positive for your community and for motorcycling. And it's a great way to have some fun.

BIKERS OF AMERICA FIGHT AGAINST MD.

FIGHT
THE GOOD FIGHT.

HARD CASH

• If you're looking for a **tax break** before April 15th, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) could help you and every two-wheel enthusiast in the country. The non-profit organization, which relies on voluntary contributions to continue its work, has just established a fund that allows any donations to be deducted at tax time.

All the foundation could give you and its five main industry supporters, Harley-Davidson, Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha, before the Fund was grateful thanks. Now, every dollar sent to the **MSF Fund** at 780 Elkridge Landing Rd., Linthicum, Maryland 21090, not only avoids the IRS, but also helps motorcycling in four major areas. You can channel your money into rider education, licensing, research or public-information programs promoting safer motorcycling.

• England's Lord Alexander **Hesketh** would probably appreciate a few generous contributions to his motorcycling cause right now. The millionaire guardian of Britain's only production street machines has run into both mechanical and financial problems. Press criticism of the gearbox in his Lordship's new vee-twin resulted in its complete redesign. This in turn has delayed delivery of the first production model until early in 1982. Hesketh was forced to borrow a further **million** dollars to carry the firm through the winter. Share prices have fallen, but backers who poured $2.4 million into the project through the London Stock Exchange are hoping the expensive British white hope will still be in demand after all its setbacks.

• A British firm with fewer financial worries is the **Dunlop** Tire Company. Despite reduced tire sales worldwide, the giant company has just invested $5 million in improved **testing** facilities at the Motor Industry Research Association (MIRA) proving facility in England. Work should be completed in 1983 on new handling tracks and skid pads that will help in developing new car and motorcycle tires. *–David Dewhurst*

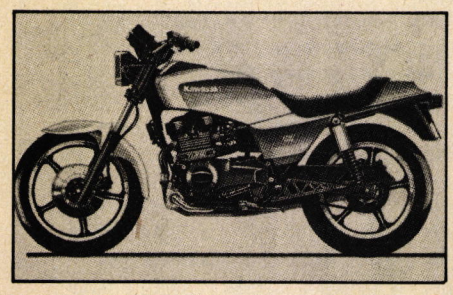
RUMORS

• Old rumors never die, they just get more tantalizing. That's what has happened to the not-too-tall tale of a **vee-four** Suzuki that first appeared in the August 1980 issue of CYCLE GUIDE. Back then the word was that **Suzuki** had an 1100cc motor with shaft drive in a fairly conventional Suzuki chassis. Of course the

factory denied any knowledge of such a fearsome beast, but news from those who know is that the mighty vee is not a million miles from your dealer's showroom. Indeed, a 1000cc version of the new Suzuki might well get its first public airing at the Milan show.

• Italy might also be the launching point for Suzuki's other big secret. Well, if you have been reading Guide Lines you know it isn't much of a secret, but Suzuki is still denying an imminent launch of a **turbocharged** GS650. Our Oriental source only got a brief glimpse of the bike, but he claims the turbobike looks little different from the **Katana**-styled 650 that's now available in Europe.

• Kawasaki also is rumored to be preparing a turbocharged version of an existing model. In the case of **Big K** it's a KZ750 with little more than a restyled seat and tank to distinguish it



Kawasaki 750 Turbo

Is Japan blowing it again?

from the normally aspirated model. But lurking under that familiar facade is a monster motor that, if you can believe the stories, pumps out **100 horsepower**. When you dial light weight into this exciting equation you get a KZ750T with a power-to-weight ratio better than the GPz1100's.

• Not all the turbo news is coming from Japan these days, though. There is a strong smell of garlic in the air, and it could be coming from the pressurized barrels of a 500cc **Moto Morini**. The vee-twin won't be the first bike to use an IHI turbo, but it might be the first to use an **intercooler**. Morini could also be the first and last company to use a DellOrto carb in a pressurized induction system. And if you can believe someone else's scale, the Morini could weigh as much as 80 pounds less than Honda's vee-twin turbo.

• There are even tales of turboed triples just across town at the Laverda plant. The giant **Jota** is also said to be running a new 120-degree crank to sooth its power-pulsing. New chief engineer Giuseppe Bocchi is also known to be keen on **four**-cylinder motors, but perhaps that's a change that will only come with time.

• You will also have to wait awhile to see if Kawasaki is really working on the ultimate **touring** rig. Honda Interstates have already been seen rolling in and out of Kawasaki's R&D shop, and sources close to the top suggest that not even Honda's new Aspencade will come close to the new green flagship.

• You're not going to see Kawasaki's big rig in any 1982 lineup, but '83 is already starting to look promising. There are still new models to be

Continued

Got a wobble? Brace it!

Nine out of ten motorcycles wobble when you round a fast curve or ride down a rain-grooved freeway. For the most part, the wobble has little to do with tire pressure, shock preload, or tread pattern. The wobble comes from fork flex.

The front fork is an engineer's nightmare. It supports and steers a heavy, rotating mass at the end of two long, slender tubes filled with springs and oil. It comes as no surprise that the fork legs flex out of parallel when you turn the bars to lean into a curve. As a result, the front wheel wanders, rough pavement causes front wheel shimmy, and the fork binds in its up-and-down motion. The bike wobbles.

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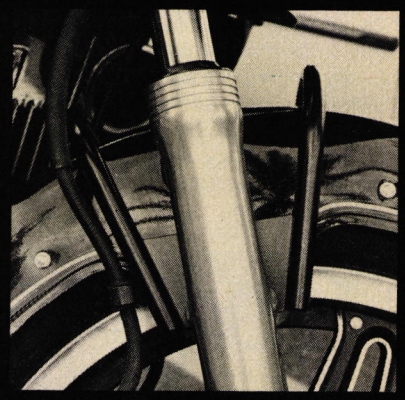

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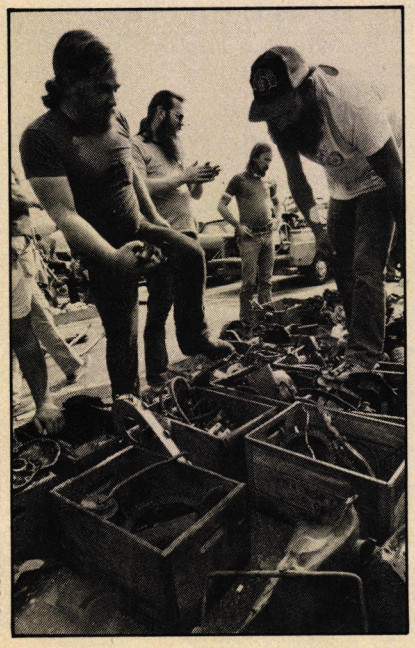
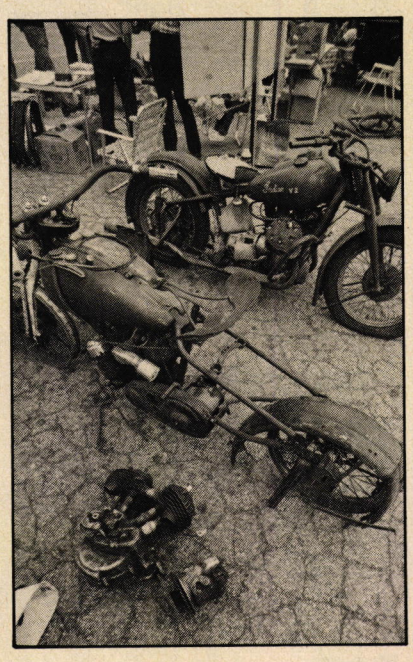
If it roars and rolls, can it ever be obsolete?

•The 1930 Indian 101 Scout is merely wonderful. Elegant dark-blue-and-creme paint has been applied with painstaking care, and the old Indian gleams in timeless perfection. "It's like they used to build in the old days," says its ironically youngish owner. The stroked, dry-sumped, flathead vee-twin sits in a frame that is no more than enough tubing to hold the motorcycle together. A bobbed fender, controls, chrome, a place for a man to sit and ride: That's the substance of this machine. It is sparse—a motorcycle cut clean to its essence.

And today that essence is on display at the 7th Annual classic bike meet for the Southern California chapter of the Antique Motorcycle Club of America. Over 100 of the 7000 oldies owned by AMCA members are gathered in a shopping center parking lot. A few of these bikes are not only old crocks, but genuine old Crockers built in America between 1936 and 1941. Thanks to a flourishing flea market of parts, a surprising number of the ancient two-wheelers remain in running condition. At one spot near the display area, 30-odd years of accumulated throwaways have been dumped into the milk crates for scavenging, examination and sale. Fingers rake through mechanical gravel, probing for buried treasure. By two in the afternoon, the milk crates are empty and nearly $4,000 has changed hands. It's a subjective line dividing junk from treasure.





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Bob, who has been dealing with the problem of parts availability for a long time, is discussing the immaculately restored dark-blue-and-creme Indian Scout. " You can ride 'em like that. I rode mine to Visalia like that," he says. He's been riding since the Twenties. Now he works on old bikes and owns several: two '47 Indian Chiefs, a '29 Henderson, a '26 JD Harley, a '16 Indian, a '33 Indian Four and a '50 Indian in the process of restoration. His car is a '41 Cadillac. "I drive an Indian Four '33. I'd go anywhere on it. I'd go to New York City on it—never hesitate. That's what people used to do." And what they used to do, Bob still does to a remarkable degree. "I've never ridden anything that's newer than a 1950. In fact, I've never ridden *it* yet."

He points out a '28 dual-cam Harley. "Never should have quit making that bike. Never. They could sell that bike today. Lots of people would buy 'em."

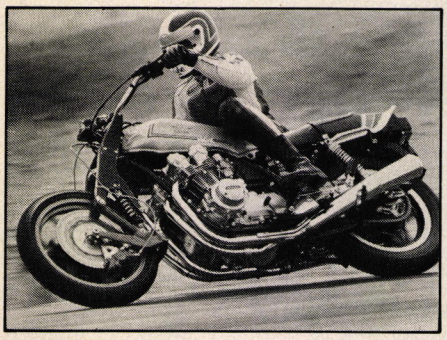
Bob is full of arcane information: why the Cleveland Four was better than the Indian Four, the workings of a parade clutch and the mysteries of Indian identification lettering. He stops to admire an immaculate Indian Scout from the Fifties, the 440cc vertical twin showcased in fine red paint. "If you brought 'em out today, you could sell 'em like hotcakes."

His reverie of sawdust memories is broken by several old bikes being run around the parking lot. At once a BSA triple flat-tracker, an AJS single roadracer, a Whizzer in a Schwinn frame, a Matchless 500 single, a Moto Guzzi single, some ancient Harleys and many more are coughing the years out their exhaust pipes. The wonderful blue-and-creme Indian Scout takes a few turns and bellows gloriously through its dual shorty pipes. The air is filled with the heat of old cylinders with fire still in them and their breath of hot castor oil.

For this day, the glories of the past are truly alive once again. To dismiss the show as nothing but nostalgia is to miss the point. This is fact: The bikes may be as old as motorcycling's yesterdays, but the smiles are as new as now. *–Don Fuller*

shown, and already loose tongues are wagging about what's ahead. Honda is on top of the list of maybes with more than a chance of an all-new 550cc **16-valve** four in the works. Those lucky folks in Europe have already had a glimpse of Honda's sportbike contender and it comes bristling with Pro-Link suspension and disc brakes enclosed inside water-tight drums. There is also talk of a 16-valve 400 four to excite all those who lamented losing the old 400F.

• Farsighted folk looking further ahead are sure that Honda has even more exciting stuff in store. Spy photos of a secret testing session on **linkage** front forks suggest more than a passing interest in high-technology suspensions.



New technology testing

Possibly the start of a suspension war.

And word from Japan tells of an unusually large order for oval pistons being placed with Honda's piston supplier. NR500 testing has so far called for little more than hand-built batches of pistons, and this larger order can only point to production racers or perhaps even to production street bikes.

• Race technology has also resulted in a sophisticated motor for the guy on the street. It's not yet available in this country, but trail riders around the world can now enjoy the luxury of a **water-cooled** DT125.

• And if you long for that little gem, perhaps you will be satisfied with a bigger **four-stroke** trail bike. It appears that Suzuki is almost ready to offer a brand new SP250 four-valver that rides in a Full-Floater frame. Believe it when you see it. *–David Dewhurst*

AFTER THE FACT

• If you're still looking for the **electronic advance** on your 1981 GS450EC Suzuki, you can stop looking. It doesn't have one. Suzuki was quick to point out that its ad on page 49 of the December issue of CYCLE GUIDE was incorrect in proclaiming electronic advance with its transistorized ignition on the 450.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• So, you can't get your dealer to let you test-ride a bike? Move to **Australia.** The New South Wales Honda distributor has created a fleet of

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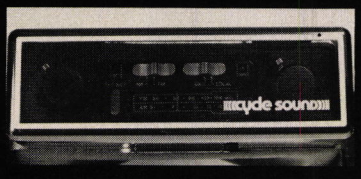

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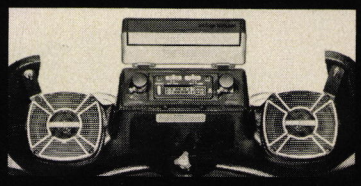

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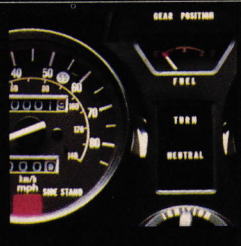

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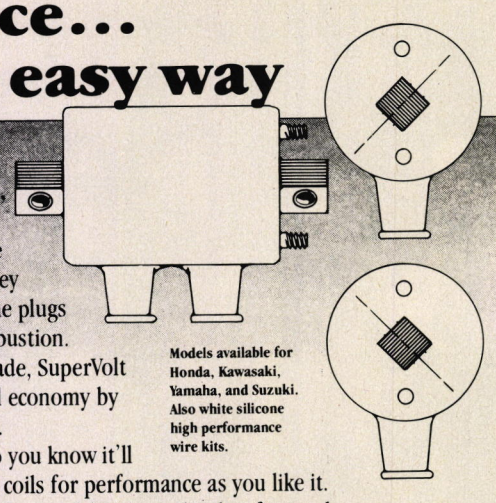

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demo-bikes to be trucked from dealer to dealer. All you need is a license and a helmet.

• You'll need more than that, though, to get a test ride on Ivan Kossinov's **53-liter** motorcycle. The one-off Russian machine is powered by a two-cylinder steam engine with 260x500mm bore-and-stroke dimensions, needs blowlamps to get started and has a top speed of 30 mph and a maximum range of one-quarter mile. Persistent rumors of a Kossinov **steam turbo** haven't been confirmed. Yet.

• Maybe Ray Ker-Lanson's BMW R100RT isn't as spectacular as a Kossinov turbo, but it did have enough steam to propel him to a new around-Australia record of 8 days, four hours and 58 minutes–13 hours better than the old mark. According to Ker-Lanson, his study of **hypno-therapy** played a big part in the success of the venture. Perhaps his trance had something to do with the new champ's having seen only four **kangaroos** during his entire trip.

• One wonders what Douglas C. Giancoli, author of **"Physics:** Principles with Applications", had in mind in his book. On page 34, he seriously says, "When the motorcycle is 50 meters behind the car, the rider pushes down on the accelerator and passes the car . . ." Well, if Einstein could forget where his glasses were, surely Giancoli can forget where the accelerator is on two-wheelers, right?

• While Giancoli is busy confusing students, other scholars have been studying dreaded Vibration-induced **White Finger**, a condition caused by a combination of vibration and cold. When permanent damage has occurred, cold alone will cause VWF. The ultimate result of the disease is total occlusion of affected blood vessels in the fingers and hands. If you need a reason to get new gloves and a tune-up for your mount, this could be it.

• **Turbobikers** in Britain can apparently forget the dangers of VWF, unless they want to ride without insurance. The country's top motorcycle insurer, Devitt DA, is refusing to provide coverage for turbos. Honda and Yamaha, both having unveiled turbos, are trying to get Devitt to reconsider, but without success so far.

• In America, you might not want to escape even if you're in **jail**. Youthful offenders confined to California's Afflerbaugh-Paige Pre-Vocational School can take a free motorcycle riding course. School principal Darwin Lumley feels the course teaches motivation and the acceptance of instruction. Thirteen dual-purpose TS motorcycles were donated by US Suzuki.

• They probably don't have anything like that behind the **Iron Curtain**. Maybe that's why Polish rider Adam Kowalezyk scored a clean (no dabs) of a different sort at the final round of the Trials Championship in West Germany. After completing the first section, Kowalezyk rode up the steps of the local police station and demanded political asylum.

• And finally, our Masochist of the Month, Dinesh Patel of India. The 25-year-old rider claims to have ridden 720 miles from Ahmedabad to New Dehli **blindfolded**. This has to be the maximum example of a motorcyclist really playing it by ear. *–Tash Matsuoka* ●

ROAD TEST:

Suzuki GS750EZ

It's the cam lift, not the facelift, that makes the difference.

BY PAUL DEAN

What do you do for an encore when you already build a motorcycle that's the best thing in its class?

Well, the radical approach would be to throw that design in the scrapheap and roll out an all-new one. Or you could go to the other extreme and simply rearrange the pinstripes before running the same old bike by the public one more time. Probably, though, the most intelligent strategy is to stick with that same basic motorcycle, all right, but to improve it by rectifying anything that had caused problems or provoked criticism.

Judging by those parameters, Suzuki seems to have made the right moves with its new 750-class flagship. Because that company's 1982

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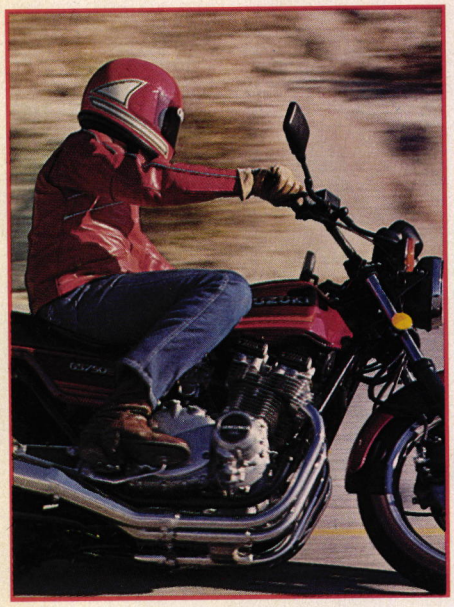


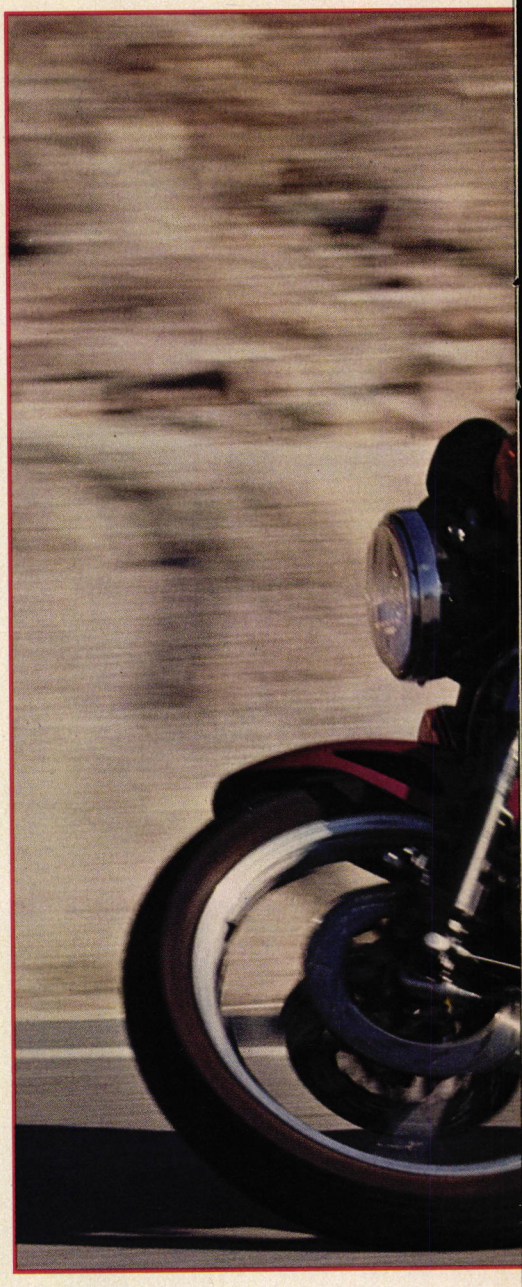
GS750EZ is essentially the same motorcycle as the 1981 GS750EX—a bike hailed by most critics as the best all-around 750 on the market—except that it now boasts a number of refinements and detail changes, most of them in response to complaints about last year's bike. As a result, Suzuki has extruded a significantly better motorcycle out of the one that already was acknowledged as The Best.

Not that the '81 GS750 gave anyone much to grouse about. It was, after all, equal to or better than its competition in virtually every imaginable category of performance (as verified in CYCLE GUIDE's 750 Comparison Test, June 1981 issue), and it offered a range of versatility that the others couldn't match. Regardless of whether it was involved in ten-tenths horizon-tilting on a twisty backroad or relaxed vertical cruising on the Superslab or just plain day-to-day lunchbox-toting around town, the GS750E always seemed to be doing precisely what it liked best.

Still, some riders *did* find fault with it, even if they had to pick a few nits to do so. Take engine performance, for instance: The Suzuki, they whined, was not *the* hottest 750 around, pointing to the Yamaha 750 Seca's capability of blitzing the quarter-mile a few hundredths of a second more quickly than the GS. But unless Yamaha has secretly pumped up the Seca's power output for 1982, that situation seems likely to change. Because every GS750EZ rolls off of the assembly line armed with considerably more firepower in its 16-valve, double-cam motor—about a quarter of a second's worth, to be more precise.

What this means is that the Z-model GS is a 12-second-flat 750, one that could even dip into the high *elevens* if the strip conditions are any better than those we encountered at Orange County International's slick start-line area (left by a Funny-Car National run there the day before) when we recorded our 12.011-second best E.T. What's more, the engine's newfound thunder has not come at the noticeable expense of the healthy low-end and midrange torque that made last year's bike so pleasant to ride when it was *not* in full-on dragrace mode.

That's intoxicating, leading-edge performance, indeed, for a 750, but what's more impressive is that so much additional power (a quarter of a second in a quarter of a mile is a *bunch*) has resulted from only three relatively minor engine changes. The intake cam was ground with one more millimeter of lift, and it now bumps the valves open six degrees sooner and lets them bang shut six degrees later. And complementing this rudimentary hot-rodding trick is a recalibrated ignition curve that initially retards the timing two degrees (for a smoother idle with the more-radical cam) but adds five degrees at full advance (for maximum power production).



There are a few differences of lesser significance on the new engine, one being the use of hex-head bolts to secure the cases and covers rather than the traditional, easily bunged-up Phillips-head screws. The sole cosmetic change is that the little rectangular "beauty covers" on the outer ends of each cambox are now black-and-polished alloy castings rather than chrome-plated sheet-metal stampings. And electrically speaking, the Z has a permanent-magnet starter motor that's claimed

to outcrank and outlive the electromagnetic motor used previously.

Otherwise, the engine remains just as it was in '81. It retains Suzuki's patented TSCC (Twin Swirl Combustion Chamber), four-valve-per-cylinder configuration with forked cam followers that allow each lobe to open two valves. The real-world advantage of this design (also used on the GS1100), however, is that the followers make it easy for the owner to perform his own valve-lash adjustments, whereas conventional shim-and-bucket arrangements call for an assortment of tools and shims that most people just don't have.

Engine-wise, the GS750 actually shares quite a lot with the GS1100, which speaks well for its reliability potential, but there's an important difference in the lower-end construction: The 1100 uses a built-up crankshaft with roller bearings on the main journals and con-rod big ends, while the 750 has a one-piece forged crank with plain bearings all around. And although roller-bearing cranks are fractionally more efficient for maximum-performance applications, a plain-bearing bottom-end is at least as durable, not to mention being considerably less expensive to manufacture, as well as to repair or replace.

Plain-bearing engines also tend to run a bit more smoothly, which may account for some of the GS750EZ's exceptionally low level of vibration. At moderate rpm the rider is only remotely aware of the motor's presence just inches from his knees; and it takes an excursion up into the tachometer's twilight zone before any tingles show up in the grips and pegs that could be considered even mildly annoying.

Smoothly, in fact, best describes the way in which the GS750 engine does just about everything. It pulls smoothly from just above idle all the way up to its 9500-rpm redline; it makes the transition smoothly into the really productive part of the powerband at around 6000 rpm; and it snicks through the gears smoothly, completing each change with the short-throw, low-effort precision that has become a hallmark of Suzuki gearboxes in recent years.

The only way, really, in which the engine is *not* ultra-smooth is in the way it behaves when the throttle is switched from fully closed to barely cracked-open and vice-versa. The reaction to those minimal changes is simply too abrupt; and that

Continued

oversensitivity of the Mikuni CV carbs, magnified by a bit of excess lash in the driveline, tends to produce some minor but nonetheless bothersome lurching as you try to regulate the rpm at these smallish throttle openings.

This is one specific complaint about the GS750 (and GS1100, as well) that has *not* been adequately dealt with by Suzuki ever since the 1980 model year. The same could be said about a particular shortcoming of the chassis, that being the relatively limited cornering clearance. The combination of low-slung engine and soft suspension makes it easier to bang the usual undercarriage bits—stands, pegs and exhaust hardware—on the GS than on most comparable bikes when the cornering gets hot and heavy.

Suzuki's reluctance to remedy *this* condition, however, is a lot more understandable than is the throttle-response problem. Because significantly increasing the cornering clearance on this bike would have entailed either a major chassis rethink or a considerable firming-up of the springing and damping rates to reduce suspension compression during hard cornering. And since the former would be prohibitively expensive and the latter would ruin the most luxurious ride in the 750 class, the best alternative (and the one Suzuki chose) is simply to leave well-enough alone.

Besides, despite its Rolls-Royce ride, the GS750EZ handles with marvelous ease and agility right up until the sparks fly. And at that point, the bike has been banked over at a respectable if not incredible angle, especially if the spring preload on the Showa damping-adjustable shocks is on its highest setting and the fork's static air pressure is up around 10 to 12 psi. A hard-charging canyon racer will, no doubt, yearn for more leanability, as will anyone roadracing the GS in box-stock classes—in which case, removing the centerstand will net some more of that precious banking angle. But for 95 percent of GS750EZ riders, the standard cornering clearance will be more than adequate 99 percent of the time.

Actually, the springing and damping rates at the front of the '82 bike are slightly *softer* than on the '81; in fact, the entire fork is different, the leading-axle fork with its two-rate springs having been exchanged for an inline-axle type with *triple*-rate springs. But that softening doesn't seem to have hurt the handling at all; and there is 8mm additional front wheel trail afforded by the new fork geometry that makes the GS even steadier and more confidence-inspiring than it was before, no matter if it's barreling down the straight and narrow or bending around the tight and twisty.

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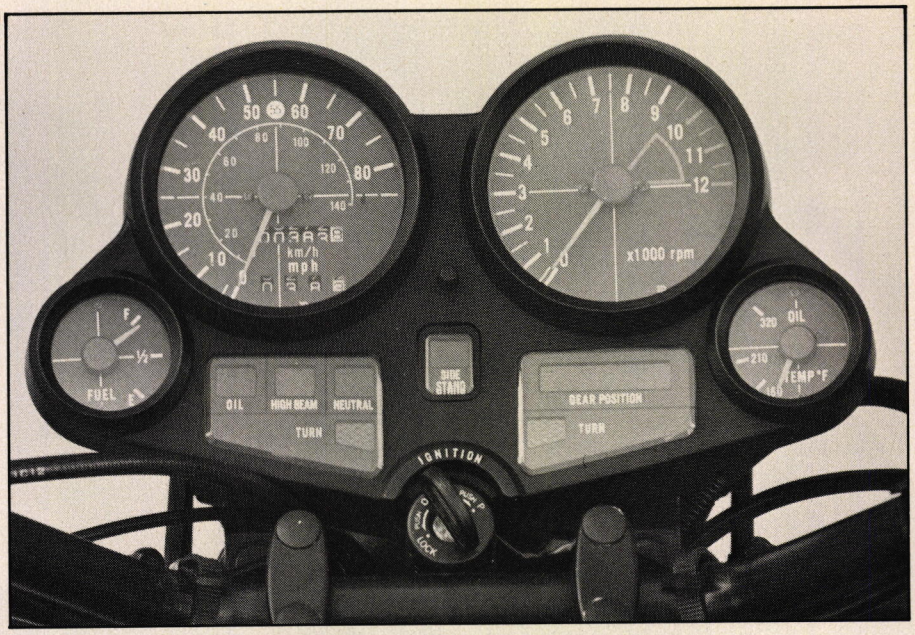

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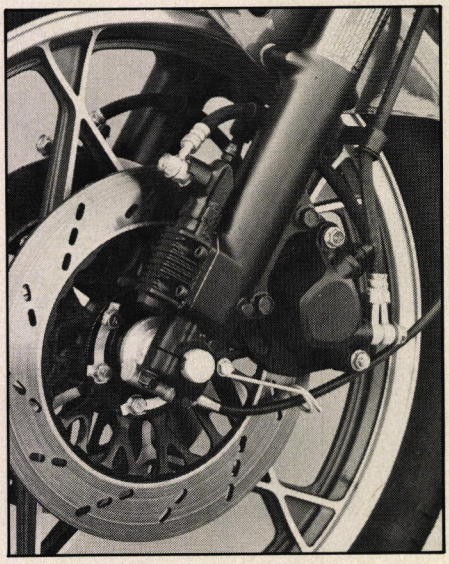
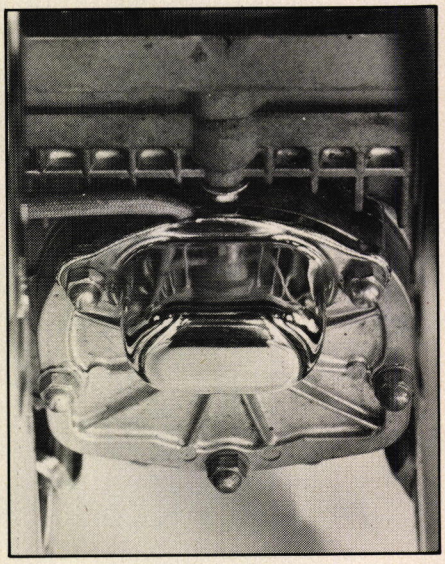


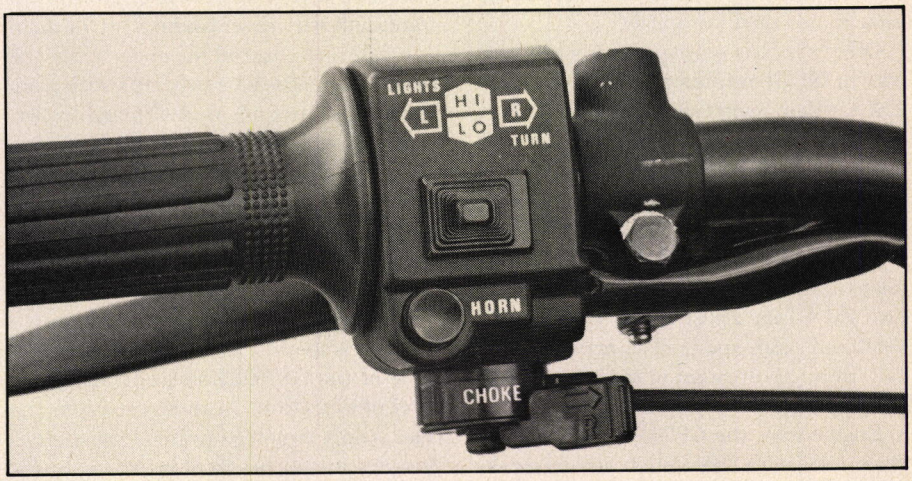
Dual anti-dives on new inline-axle fork

Braking both fork and wheel.



Sending unit for new oil-temp gauge

It's merely a matter of degrees.



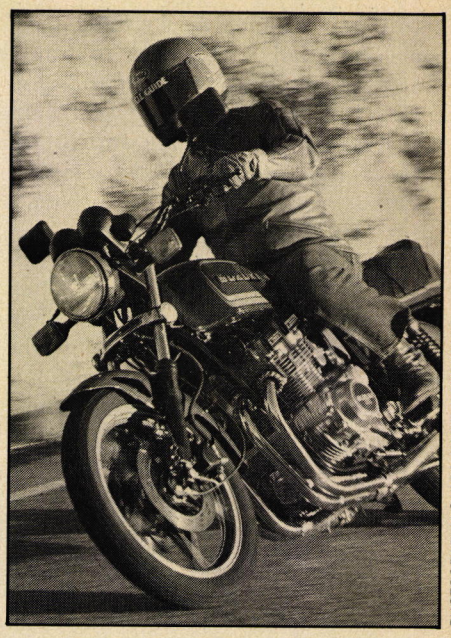
Choke lever's new location near leftside handgrip

Getting a better handle on the do-three-things-at-once cold-start drill.

Anyone who's ever ridden an '80 or '81 GS750 and tries the new bike will, however, notice a small improvement in what was already the finest ride in the class. The fork absorbs little chops and ripples more readily, and the big bumps melt away under the GS as though they were optical illusions instead of concrete realities. And most of what does get past the fork and shocks is soaked up by one of the finest seats in the business. The only time the ride feels even the least bit harsh is over smallish, abrupt bumps, like the expansion joints of some concrete-slab highways. There's a bit of choppiness then, felt mostly through the rear; but perhaps this is more noticeable only becuse the front suspension is so efficient over the same undulations.

Nobody, of course, asked for a smoother ride after trying last year's 750, but many did clamor for a more reasonable handlebar, something to replace the super-long, radically swept-back tiller-style bar and the bolt-upright riding position it forced. And they got their wish, for the Z-model has a bar with a much less-dramatic rearward sweep that lets the rider cant his torso forward ever so slightly. Not only does this allow a better seating position for improved long-ride comfort, it feels more natural and confidence-inspiring when you're playracing on your favorite backroad.

Suzuki also was bombarded with impassioned pleas to do away with the bulky-looking rectangular headlight and the bulbous instrument package that went along with it in favor of something more conventional. And the company's response to that input from riders and dealers is apparent in the round halogen headlight and traditional-style instrumentation on the Z-model. And in the process, the dashboard acquired a handy oil-temperature gauge on the right side to balance the fuel gauge on the left. But more important, the overall effect of this new hardware is to make the new 750 look a lot lighter than the old one. In truth, the Z-model's weight *is* down just a bit—six pounds—some of it due to the new light/instrument package; but the bulk of it is because the new front fork assembly is considerably lighter.



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PHOTOGRAPHY ©1982 DAVID DEWHURST

That fork lightness seems all the more impressive when you consider that its overall weight includes the hydraulic anti-dive mechanism that's built onto each slider leg. The purpose of the anti-dive is to keep the front suspension from compressing so dramatically during hard braking, a trick it attempts to do by virtually closing off the flow of damping oil whenever the front brake lever is squeezed. The idea, of course, is to prevent the steering geometry from being quickened due to front-end dive, thus allowing the bike to remain much more stable during hard stopping—a time in which it needs all the stability it can get.

But while the anti-dive might not weigh a lot, it doesn't really *do* a lot, either. The truth is that it doesn't prevent front-end dive as much as it merely *slows* it somewhat. The fork will still compress just about as far during most braking situations as it would have without the anti-dive, but it just takes a little bit longer to do it. So even though you end up with practically the same quickened geometry you would have without the anti-dive, that slower transition gives the rider a little more time—even if it's only a fraction of a second—to adjust to that change.

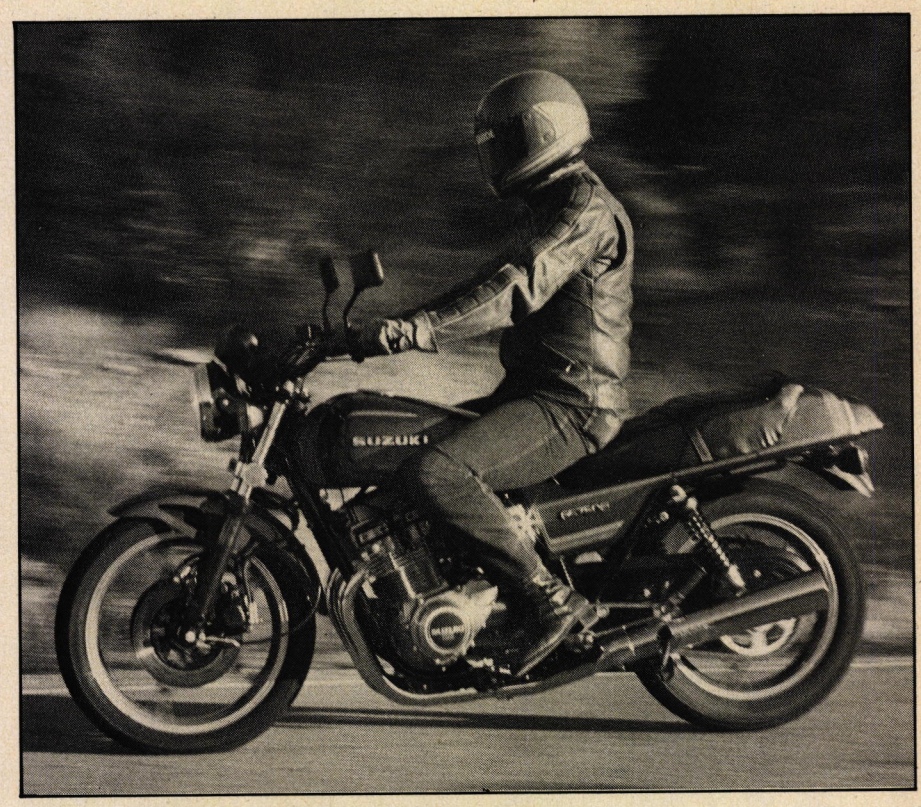
That fact alone qualifies the anti-dive as

Continued

a worthwhile feature, even if it could stand some additional development. And that pretty well sums up the GS750EZ as a complete motorcycle, as well, for all of its model-year refinements are worthwhile ones that have made an exceptional motorcycle substantially better, even though there still is room for improvement.

But is it still the best? Common sense says that it ought to be, since the other manufacturers have not changed their comparable models as much as Suzuki has changed the GS. But because we haven't actually tested those other new 750 fours, we can't be positive that the Suzuki will retain its King-Of-The-Hill status for 1982. Especially not when a near-revolutionary machine like Honda's all-new 750 vee-four is looming just over the horizon.

But those questions are impossible to answer right now. And until someone actually does come along with a 750 of any configuration that is faster, smoother, more comfortable, more versatile and better-handling, the GS750EZ is The Class Act in the 750 class. It's a case, in fact, of the encore being better than the original performance. •



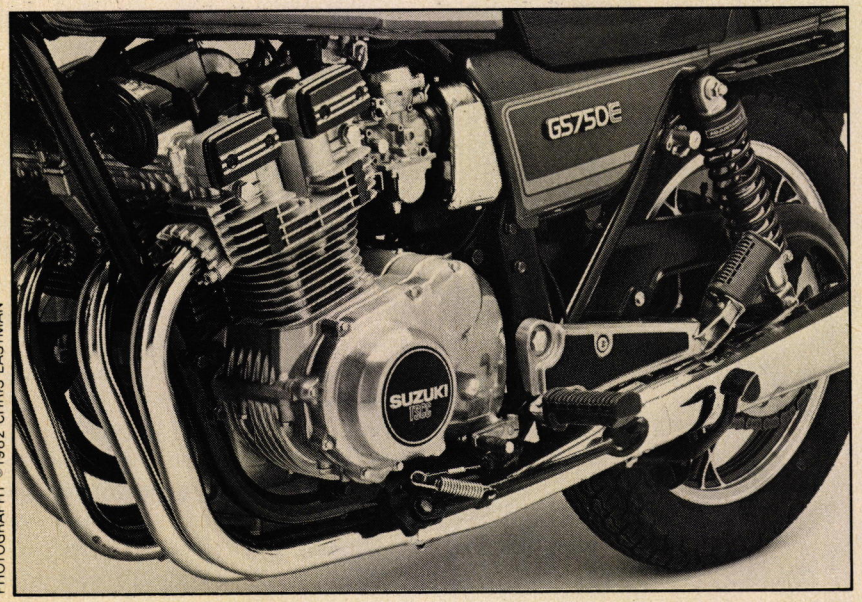
PHOTOGRAPHY ©1982 DAVID DEWHURST

GS in nose-down attitude during brisk 30-to-zero stop

Graphic proof that anti-dive only slows fork compression, doesn't prevent it.

Charting the Changes

Engine: Intake-cam lift increased lmm; intake-cam timing altered to open valves six degrees sooner and close them six degrees later. Ignition curve reworked to retard timing two degrees at idle but advance it five degrees at full advance. Starter motor now permanent-magnet type instead of electromagnetic type for longer life and stronger cranking power. External cambox covers now cast alloy instead of chromed stamped steel. Hex-head bolts on all cases and covers instead of Phillips-head screws.



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Suspension: Front fork now inline-axle-type instead of leading-axle, but with same amount of wheel travel. Change in fork offset has increased front wheel trail 8mm. Fork springs are triple-rate instead of dual-rate, and the recommended static air pressure is lower (6.5 psi vs. 7.1 psi). Rebound-damping rate has been upped slightly. Rear shocks unchanged.

Brakes: Actual brake mechanisms same as last year, but front fork now incorporates hydraulic anti-dive system that is actuated by front-brake line-pressure.

Tires: H-rated Bridgestone Mag Mopus tires used in place of last year's IRC rubber, also H-rated.

Details: Round halogen headlight replaces last year's rectangular light. New-style round instruments supersede the semi-circle tach and speedo used previously, and an oil-temperature gauge has been added to the cluster. Handlebar is less swept-back and painted black instead of chrome-plated. Choke lever has been moved from the center of the top triple clamp to the left handlebar grip, where it is operated by the left thumb. The seat's grab rail is replaced by a seat strap. Muffler/rear-footpeg bracket now cast alloy instead of stamped steel. •

GS750TZ: A Triumph Of Japanese Design

• To Suzuki, the GS750TZ is more than just another new model; it's a solution. In the final analysis it might not prove to be *the* solution, but for now it's at least *a* solution to a dilemma that the entire Japanese motorcycle industry, not just Suzuki, has been stuck on the horns of for the last few years: how to design factory-custom motorcycles to have precisely The Look that is so vital to their sales success without having them all look alike.

A Catch-22 situation, indeed, and the GS750TZ is Suzuki's response to it. The TZ is a decidedly conservative approach to the problem, though, not just in the way the bike looks but in the fact that it will be the only model in the company's entire 1982 lineup styled in this fashion (all the other customs will be in the usual L-model configuration). Apparently, Suzuki wants to test the waters of acceptance for a new generation of factory-custom motorcycles by cautiously dipping in with just one toe rather than jumping in feet-first. And instead of breaking any all-new styling ground, the TZ simply attempts to split the difference between customs and standard models. The styling still captures the essence of The Great American Street Cruiser, but some of the more practical ergonomic elements have been lifted from the standard-issue Suzukis.

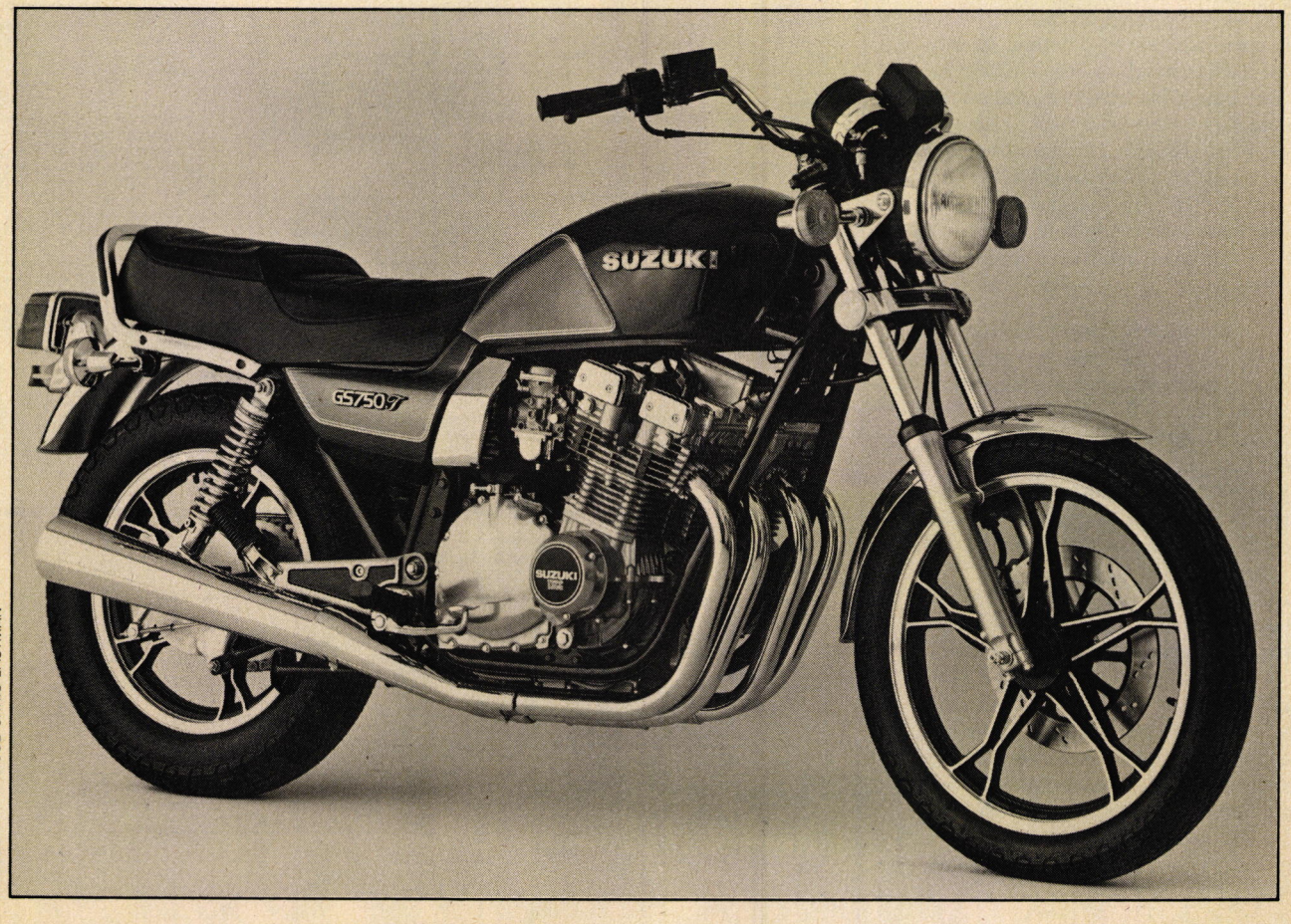
What emerges from this marriage made in Hamamatsu is a clean, simple, unpretentious motorcycle that almost looks more "classic" than "custom." There is, in fact, more than a hint of Triumph, circa late Sixties, in the TZ's lines.

Much of that Britbike look is no doubt due to the particular profile of the TZ's 4.5-gallon teardrop tank, especially with its Triumph-like color-contrasting knee cut-outs. But the overall effect of being a latter-day classic might be the result of the bike having an unfamiliar (for this day and age) combination of familiar pieces. The gas tank, for example, has the requisite custom-bike shape and the handlebar is conventional (read: *not* high-rise pullbacks) fare, but the two usually aren't found on the same motorcycle. Likewise for the stepped seat, fat 17-inch rear tire and simple rear fender (all custom-bike traditions); but the seat is not radically stepped, the fenders are not bobbed short and the front fork is not—and doesn't even *look* to be—extended (all standard-bike traditions). The difference, therefore, between this bike and the usual factory customs is that the TZ resembles a vintage Triumph *before* customizing, not after.

Mechanically, the TZ offers no such controversies, being essentially an E-model GS750 with major cosmetic differences and a few mechanical dissimilarities. Most of the latter are obvious (single front disc, drum rear brake, no anti-dive mechanisms on the fork, different spoke pattern on the cast wheels), and the instrumentation was lifted directly from Suzuki's L-series street customs. Otherwise, everything else is identical to its E-model counterpart.

That should assure the GS750TZ of being an extraordinarily fast, fine-handling boulevard cruiser; but the issue at stake here is not how quickly the GS750TZ will move on the street but how quickly it will move in the showroom. Suzuki believes, obviously, that the custom-styled market simply *has* to expand and that this is one of the directions it will expand in. It's our belief that there is a growing number of riders out there who will agree with Suzuki's philosophy. And for them, it can't happen a day too soon.

—Paul Dean



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Continued

Ride Review

• The new GS750 Suzuki feels considerably different from last year's, but it shouldn't. In fact, in many ways the GS feels worse than it did, even though the specifications suggest obvious improvements. Longer inlet-valve duration and lift do give a high-speed performance boost, but in the real world of 55-mph limits, the Suzuki reminds you daily of its annoying lean-surge problem.

The suspension should feel softer at the front and the same at the rear. But the bike feels harsher at both ends while cruising the freeway. And when the brakes are applied hard, the GS dives more noticeably than it ever did despite the added complexity of an anti-dive fork.

I'm not even sure I prefer the lower handlebar or the firmer seat. So, while it might still be the best 750 money can buy, it won't be *my* money that's buying one.

—David Dewhurst

• If a luxuriously soft cruise is what I want, Suzuki's GS750E provides it with a large, deeply-padded seat, ultra-compliant suspension and an abundance of lower-rpm power. But if I feel aggressive, the GS can reveal hard, athletic muscles in a hurry with a quick adjustment of the suspension and a twist of the throttle. That's what is so appealing about the GS: it can be a softy or a hard case.

Tremendous power, outstanding comfort, excellent handling—the GS750E has it all. *Almost.* Its utterly mundane appearance is a surprising flaw. With a big brother like the Katana, who would have expected such a plain new GS750E? Only Suzuki knows why this stand-out performer comes discreetly concealed in the motorcycle equivalent of a plain paper wrapper.

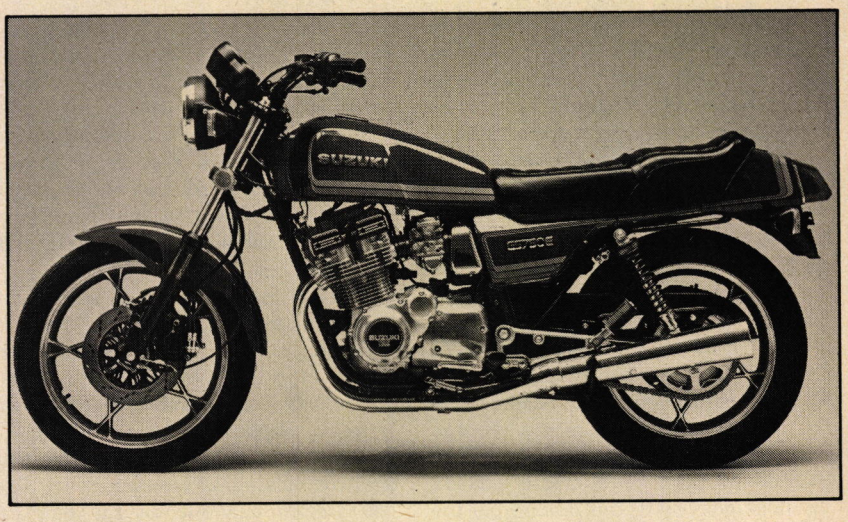
—Tash Matsuoka

• No one likes to be predictable, but the GS750EZ forces the issue. It would take some pretty specialized streetbike requirements to cast the Suzuki as lacking. The recipe's too sound. You take the 750 that swept last year's class crown, then spoon in everything that tastes good. To last year's 12.26 quarter, for instance, you add in a 0.25-second-faster run. Straight out of the superbike cookbook.

But strangely, I did like the '81 GS750 better. It provided nearly the same level of performance, while managing to pass itself off as a more universal streetbike. "Wideband" was what we called it. And somehow, whether it's the heated-up engine, the lower handlebar or the recalibrated suspension, the '82 version doesn't have quite the same appeal. It's still *the* wideband 750, at least until the vee-fours hit the bricks, only now it seems a bit too narrow-focused.

—Larry Works

Suzuki GS750EZ



SPECIFICATIONS:

IMPORTER: US Suzuki Motor Corporation
3251 East Imperial Highway
Brea, California 92621

CATEGORY: street

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $3099

ENGINE

Type	four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	67.0mm x 53.0mm
Displacement	747.4cc
Compression ratio	9.4:1
Carburetion	four 32mm Mikuni constant-vacuum
Air filter	disposable paper element
Lubrication	wet sump
Starting system	electric only
Ignition	transistorized breakerless
Charging system	12-volt; alternator, voltage regulator, rectifier

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive	helical gears; 2.163:1 ratio
Clutch	wet, multi-plate
Final drive	#630 chain (¾-in. pitch, ⅜-in width); 2.733:1 (41/15) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.571	15.201	5.0
II	1.778	10.510	7.3
III	1.381	8.164	9.3
IV	1.125	6.651	11.5
V	0.962	5.684	13.4

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front	air-spring, 35mm stanchion tube diameter/ 6.0 in. (152mm)
Rear	4-way adjustable rebound damping, 5-way adjustable spring preload / 4.3 in. (109mm)

BRAKES

Front	dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.8-in. (275mm) discs
Rear	double-action hydraulic caliper, 10.8-in. (275mm) disc

TIRES

Front	3.25H19 Bridgestone Mag Mopus L303
Rear	4.00H18 Bridgestone Mag Mopus S716

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight	519 lbs. (235kg.)
Weight distribution	47.0% front, 53.0% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)	1025 lbs. (465kg.)
Wheelbase	59.3 to 60.5 in. (1506 to 1537mm)
Seat height	32.0 in. (813mm)
Handlebar width	29.3 in. (744mm)
Footpeg height	13.5 in. (343mm)
Ground clearance	6.0 in. (152mm), at exhaust pipes
Steering head angle	28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.48 in. (114mm)
Frame	tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity	3.4 qt. (3.2l)
Fuel tank	steel, 4.6 gal. (17.5l), including 0.9 gal. (3.5l) reserve
Instrumentation	speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, fuel gauge, oil-temperature gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption	34 to 49 mpg (14 to 21 km/l)
Range, maximum	156 to 225 miles (251 to 362 km)
Range, reserve only	31 to 44 miles (50 to 71 km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated	28 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated	52 mph actual
Best ¼-mile acceleration	12.011 sec., 109.10 mph (176 kph)
Top speed (calculated)	127 mph (204 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph	31 ft. (9m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	127 ft. (39m)

WARRANTY: 12 months unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLORS: black or red

All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Suzuki GS750EZ	12.01/109.1	127	519	127
Suzuki GS750EX	12.26/108.6	126	525	130
Honda CB750F	12.40/108.3	118	526	126
Kawasaki KZ750	12.43/108.2	128	471	128
Yamaha Seca 750	12.26/108.0	128	495	134
Yamaha Virago 750	13.28/99.8	105	481	132

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See the wildest stampede of Short Track and Steeplechase Motorcycle Racing in the world. Steel ponies jockey riders shoulder to shoulder at 70 m.p.h. And they never touch their brakes! The fastest fun in the west. Only in Texas.

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TIME TRIALS 1:00 P.M.
STEEPLECHASE (TT)
SUNDAY 2:00 P.M.
TIME TRIALS 9:30 A.M.

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The Houston Astrodome Box Office
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WWR

Roger DeCoster called the CR125R radically advanced.

Johnny O' just called it radical.

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. Designed for operator use only. CRs are designed for motocross use only and are sold "AS IS" without warranty. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. © 1981 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda Motor Co., Inc., Dept. 784, Box 9000, Van Nuys, CA. 91409.

Roger DeCoster isn't the kind of guy who settles for second best. His five World Championships prove that.

And the help he gave us in developing the 1982 Honda CR125R proves he feels the same way about designing motocross bikes as he does about racing them.

The new lightweight works-type engine features a wider powerband that's easy to find. And that makes the competition easy to lose.

This year's frame gives you a riding position Roger calls superior to our works bikes. We beefed up the suspension with new Pro-Link™ ratios and new larger adjustable damping front forks. And we repositioned the engine and the radiators to give the CR125R a lower center of gravity.

It all adds up to the best handling, most rideable bike in its class.

To Roger, it's an example of motocross technology at its best.

Johnny O'Mara had another word for it. "Radical."

HONDA

FOLLOW THE LEADER

SUZUKI.
PERFORMANCE ABOVE ALL

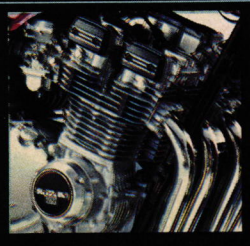
GS-1100 E

In 1981, CYCLE said, "The GS-1100 is the finest example to date of one-liter-and-up Superbikes." Incredible as it may seem, it's even better for 1982. Sleeker looking, obviously. Faster and smoother, too.

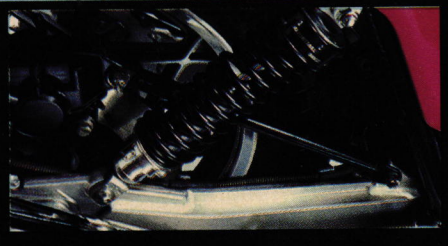
Power source is the high-performance, fuel-efficient 16-valve TSCC engine. Suspension is multi-adjustable front and rear. Brakes are triple slotted discs. Instrumentation includes fuel gauge, engine oil temperature gauge, LCD gear position indicator, check circuit, tach and speedo.

In short, the best just got better.

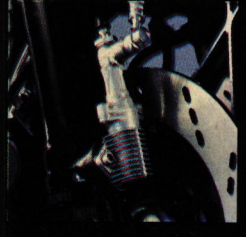
Awesome 16-valve engine: Features Twin Swirl Combustion Chambers for spectacular performance.



Non-flex aluminum box-type swing arm: Supports rear shocks that offer 5-way adjustable load settings and 4-way damping.



New anti-dive system: Makes the most advanced, fully adjustable air front forks even better.



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SUZUKI®

TRACK TEST:

Husqvarna 430CR

The Swede taste of something different.

BY RON LAWSON

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1982 CHRIS EASTMAN

Recent years have bombarded motocross tracks with a blindingly rapid barrage of innovations. Change after change has come until there is nothing left of the old ways but smoldering ruins. And in the center of the debris the leaders of the industry have come to a striking agreement on the new way to build the proper Open-class machine. The single-shock, near-500cc, four-speed theory of big-bore design is so widely endorsed that it's easy for the observer to assume that the years of change have led the industry to a universal truth—that this is *the* right formula for the Open class and there is little to absolutely no room for deviation.

But also from the ruins emerges one motorcycle different enough to blow that assumption apart. The Husqvarna 430CR refuses to conform to the modern Open-class mold in almost every respect. That it is so different is neither by accident, though, nor is it the result of a lack of choices.

Indeed, a peek behind the scenes at Husky would reveal that the company knows about all the latest tricknology. Single-shock suspension, watercooling and large-displacement engines all have found their way into prototype Huskys. But each new design has so far failed to convince Swedish engineers that it is any better than the present practice. Husqvarna feels that bigger engines have yet to deliver a powerband as manageable as the 430's, that single-shockers need more development and that the simpler a motocrosser is, the better.

As a result, this year's 430 holds no new or especially exciting technology. It's just a refinement of the same basic bike Husky has been building for years. It isn't that way because Husqvarna doesn't see the trends in the industry, nor is it that the company believes the CR is so close to perfection that it can't be improved. Husky simply believes that, for today's technology, the 430 *is* the right formula for the Open class.

But that might not be enough in the upcoming year. With the heavy metal that Japan is unleashing, the evolutionary tactics of Husqvarna might begin to look rather pale. Husky could soon find itself fighting as much against an assumption of obsolescence as against the actual technology that the competition has to offer. And as that happens, there's only one way for Husky to stay in the race—by proving itself on the track.

Continued

430CR: Tech Inspection

Engine:

Top End: The cast-aluminum cylinder and head are now finished in their natural, unpainted condition purely for cosmetic reasons. Inside the barrel, Husqvarna has raised the top of the exhaust-port window 1mm to increase horsepower slightly by extending the maximum rpm limit almost 1000 rpm. The rest of the ports remain unchanged, with a 38mm Mikuni carb feeding fuel through twin reed blocks, each with four fiber petals. Four main transfers and one booster transfer then pass fuel to the combustion chamber where a single-ring piston compresses the gas at an uncorrected ratio of 11.1:1. A 30mm-shorter header pipe on the exhaust system helps the new porting to extend the usable rpm range.

Bottom End: Magnesium crackcases, first introduced in 1981, were redesigned this year with more metal around the engine-mount/swingarm pivot area and around the tranfer-port channels to prevent cracking. The rest of the bottom end remains basically unchanged, with a full-circle crank carrying a small internal-rotor Motoplat CDI. The ignition's stator plate now mounts on a sturdier aluminum locating ring.

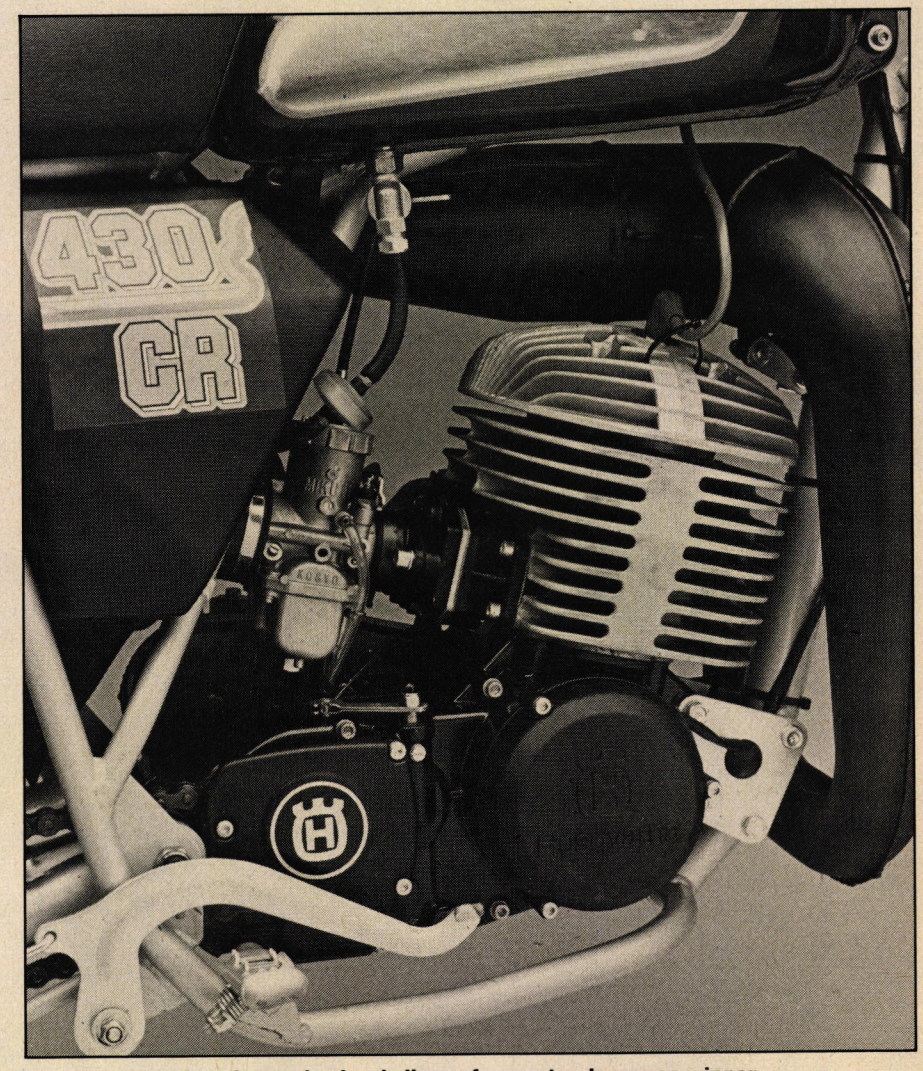
Drivetrain:

Primary Drive: Unaltered straight-cut gears transmit power to a new alloy clutch basket. The new unit dispenses with the previous large lightening holes in its back surface and has more alloy at the base of the clutch-plate ears to prevent cracking. The 430cc motor retains the primary kickstarting introduced last year.

Gearbox: The six internal gear ratios are unchanged, but each gear now receives an additional heat-treatment process to reduce the incidence of gear-dog breakage.

Suspension:

Front: The 40mm stanchion tubes and ribbed sliders offer 11.8 inches of travel. Inside each Husky-built fork is a refined damper rod that has a more-pronounced cone at both the upper



The Husqvarna has the stark, classic lines of a racetrack-proven winner

Less displacement and more gears make the CR an Open-class opposite.

and lower end to hydraulically reduce fork topping and bottoming. A wider damper piston with a plastic wiper smoothes fork action. Closer tolerances in the axle-mounting hardware improve fork rigidity.

Rear: Rebuildable Ohlins shocks now feature Teflon-coated steel rather than bronze bushings. The shock-body end cap also features a larger ridge to help ease disassembly and an O-ring seal to help keep contamination away from the main seal. While spring and damping rates are unchanged, the piggyback reservoir's nitrogen pressure is increased from 150 to 170 psi.

Wheels:

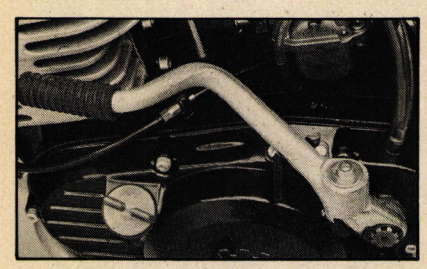
Nordisk anodized alloy rims are still laced to the conical hubs introduced in 1981. After a year with Pirelli tires, however, Husqvarna has reverted to Swedish Trelleborg rubber with a 3.00 x 21 in front and a 5.00 x 17 in the rear.

Frame:

Husqvarna's single-front-downtube chromoly frame is unaltered this year, retaining a 30.5-degree head angle with 5.98 inches of trail.

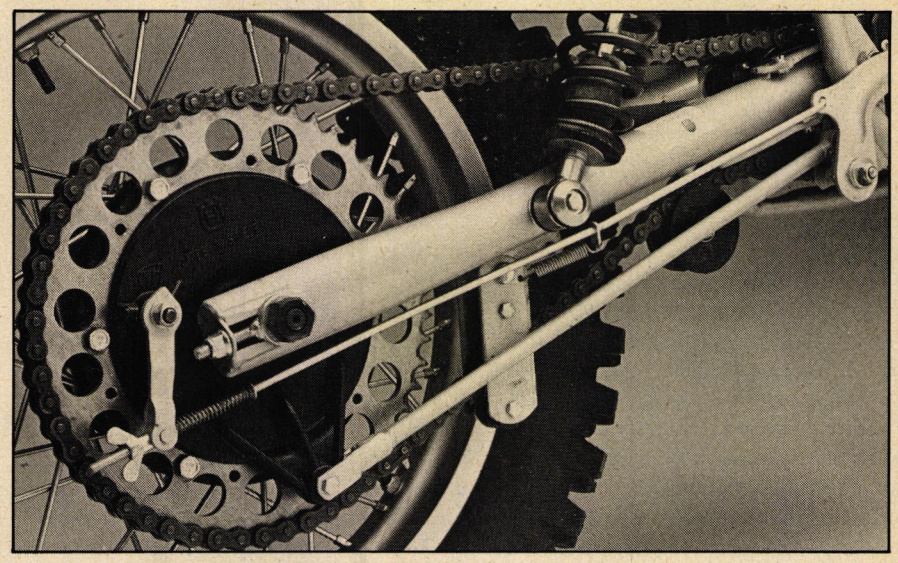
Details:

A shorter dog-leg Magura front brake lever is matched with a slightly longer front brake arm to give easy two-finger brake operation. The full-floating rear-brake torque arm now rides in a wider and stronger bushing at the frame mount. The roller chain tensioner still rides on small ball-bearings. The latest Gunnar Gasser throttle allows cable replacement with removal of only the plastic pulley cover. A new plastic seat base is lighter, and redesigned side-panels mount more securely to the frame. The aluminum gas tank is now painted in Burgundy Red.



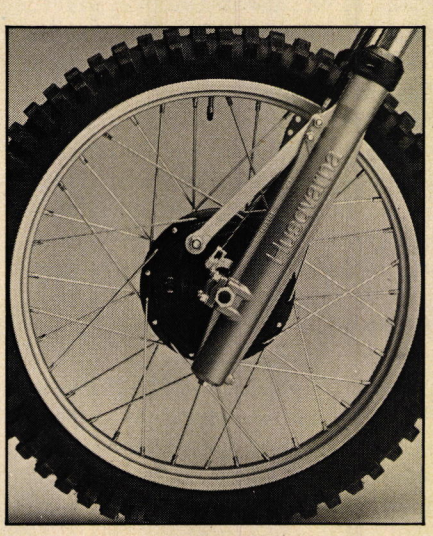
Curly kickstarter launches the Husky

And lunches itself internally.



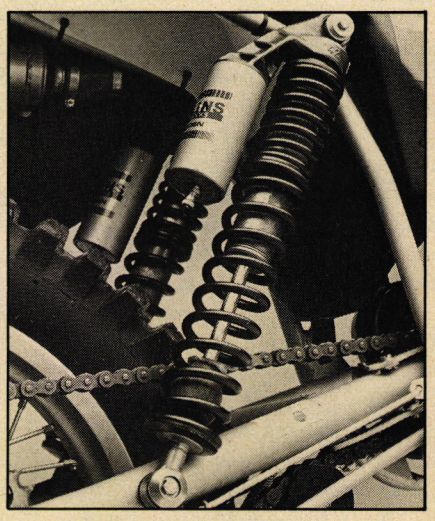
Strong, straight and stable Swedish steel swingarm

Husky says straight steel is stronger than bent aluminum.



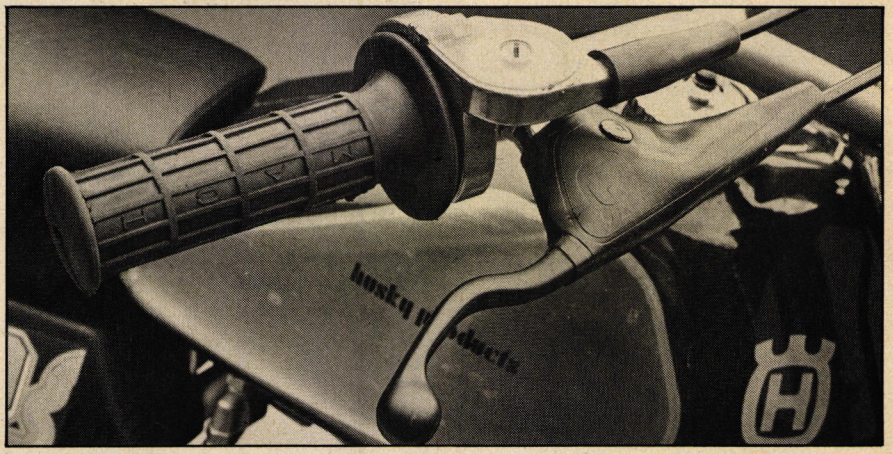
Gold-anodized rims aren't flaky

And the leaky fork isn't flexy.



Twin piggyback Ohlins

The dual-shock survivor.



New short brake lever and Gunnar Gasser are standard features on the '82 430

Short-and-straight stuff is out of the way in a quick-and-hard fall.

Continued

Husqvarna 430CR: Will it Win?

• It's clear that Husqvarna's strategy on the Open front radically breaks with conventional tactics. From the six-speed gearbox to the aluminum gas tank, the Husky 430CR is obviously different. And that's why Husky-mounted combat requires a special kind of battle plan.

The 430 is best suited for the worst conditions—the dustiest uphills, the most difficult traction and, most of all, the most elephantine, bike-eating whoops. As the course gets nastier, the Husky gets better. But by the same token, the Husky pilot can't expect to launch a 50-horsepower assault on the smooth first turn of a stadium-style night track, then blast away from everything else. The CR will perform under these conditions, but the wise motocross tactician will keep to the rough courses, letting the Husky do what it does best.

Several factors contribute to the 430's track preference, one of which is its controllable power delivery. Husqvarna doesn't subscribe to the more-is-better school of motocross design, feeling that the giant roosts and excessive wheelspin that often result are a waste of power—and just something else to get you out of control late in a tiring moto. Instead, the 430 makes it much easier for the rider to dial up just the right amount of power when exiting turns without having his efforts go up in wheelspin. And on the straights, the higher peak rpm of this year's Husky (provided by the raised exhaust port and shorter header pipe) teams up with the closely spaced ratios of the six-speed gearbox to make the CR competitive with the bigger-motored Open bikes. Short-shifting still is the ticket when traction is not optimum or the track is super-rough; but when the straights are long and relatively smooth, the CR goes fastest if you use all of its extended rpm range and shift just before the power drops off.

Still, the Husky's engine is best-suited to the gnarliest tracks; and the same is true of the chassis, primarily because of the uncanny stability it gives the bike. A long wheelbase and nearly six inches of trail combine to make the machine track so steadily that the rider begins to feel as though he could be centerpunched by a freight train and only slip off his line slightly. The machine does nothing suddenly nor gives the rider any reason to be uncertain of its limits.

But the natural cost of such incredible stability is a cumbersome feeling in turns. It takes some time to adjust to the way the Husky corners. If you decide to switch lines in the middle of a turn, you must *bend* the bike to make it deviate from its programmed path. It isn't that the Husky doesn't steer, for it will actually go anywhere it's pointed with confidence-inspiring accuracy. It's just that pointing the 430 is more of a physical task than with most bikes. Once redirected, the Husky will hold its line with the same tenacity that made it reluctant to change in the first place. Again, this makes the Husky at home on tracks where stability is valued more highly than agility.

The final and most powerful contributor to the machine's taste for the rough is its European-bred suspension. While some riders feel that the Ohlins twin-shock system is too stiff for average tracks, terrain that goes one step beyond merely average suits the Husky perfectly. Flying at top speed over the worst terrain that the worst track has to offer is a convincing experience. The Husky is still the standard by which any suspension, one-shock or two, is measured when it comes to the stuff that *real* motocross is made of.

The front end is equally impressive, thanks to the fork's smooth action and lack of noticeable flex. For 1982, damping has been slowed at both ends of the fork's stroke to take some of the harshness out of its rare bottoming and more common topping. Like the rear end, the Husky-made fork has yet to be eclipsed in performance by anything else on the market. And there is still the familiar ring of oil showing the high-water mark on the fork tubes. This is actually Husqvarna's intentional way of keeping seal friction to a minimum, but it still draws attention and negative comments.

Other mechanical features of the Husky were not quite as harmless. Although CYCLE GUIDE campaigned last year's 430 in CMC's tough Golden State series with no problems, a black cloud seemed to hang over the nearly identical '82 model. A broken pipe, a faulty ignition and a sheared kickstarter pawl all cropped-up in the first week of the test. They were, however, repaired under Husqvarna's 30-day warranty.

In spite of the details that DNFed, the Husky as a package is still doubtlessly capable of finishing on any track in the world. And on really rough tracks the Husky will be finishing in front. Because when on its own turf, the toughest, gnarliest battlefields this side of the Little Big Horn, the 430 becomes the top gun in Open warfare. —*Ron Lawson*

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Ride Review

• My instincts tell me that I ought to avoid the Husky as though it were a 235-pound clump of poison oak. The engine would seem too little to play in the same league with today's monstermotored Open bikes, and the incredibly slow steering makes the CR handle tight turns like a battleship in a backyard swimming pool.

But motocross is more than just sheer power and steering quickness, and that's why, for me at least, the Husky works so beautifully. It's just fast enough and agile enough to stay in the hunt on most tracks; and it makes the difficult task of staying in control throughout a long, hard race so much easier simply because it *doesn't* dig a trench every time you open the throttle and it *isn't* easily diverted off-course on even the roughest terrain. So as far as I'm concerned, this time my instincts can take a hike. *—Paul Dean*

• When I fork over my hard-earned cash for a motocross bike, I don't want any restrictions. I want to be able to make the most use of every cent of my investment. I want to be able to ride on any track and stand a chance of winning. And if I get tired of a closed circuit, I want to head into the hills and ride some trails.

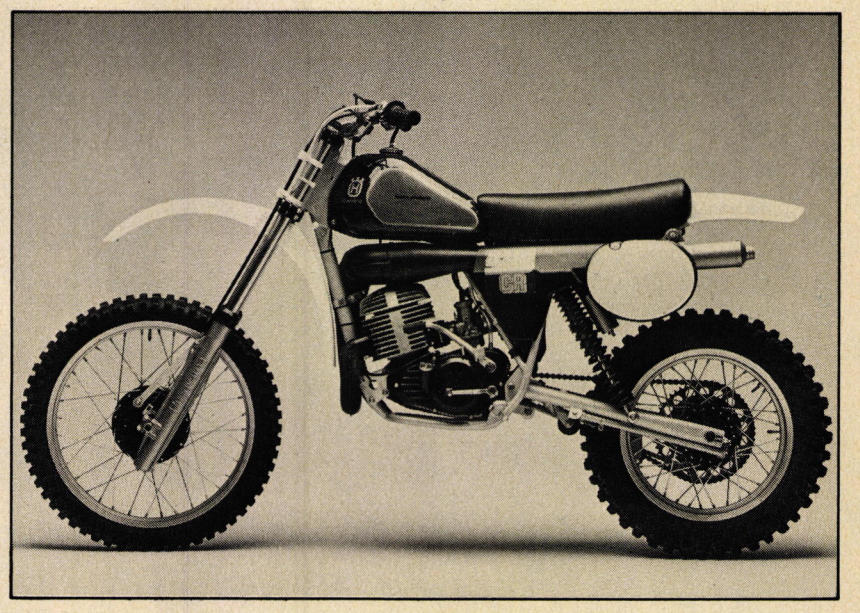
It's difficult to find a bike that fits such diverse requirements without sacrificing something along the way. The 430CR Husqvarna comes closer than most bikes at covering all the bases, and while it does get spread a little thin in some areas, the Husky's performance never lets me down. It might benefit from a little more power at times, but that would only offset its prowess elsewhere. For me, the Husqvarna has just enough of everything to make all my riding fun. *—David Dewhurst*

• It could easily be said that Husky hasn't kept up with the competition, the new 430CR having none of the high-zoot techno-trickery of the Japanese. But after riding Full-Floaters and Pro-Links, I confess that Husky still has suspension that will compare with any other. Complement that with a tractable motor and proven steering geometry, and you have a machine that can compete with Japan's best.

The Husky's only setback is its lack of the sheer grunt desperately needed to pull a holeshot. But even this isn't a disadvantage when the track gets gnarly and Japanese Open-classers become hard to handle. The Husky offers controllability, and when it comes to winning races, that's more important to me than raw horsepower. Maybe that's why the Japanese have gone to such high-zoot tricks. They have to keep up with Husky.

—Mark Diotte

Husqvarna 430CR



SPECIFICATIONS:

IMPORTER: Husqvarna Motor Corporation
4935 Mercury Street
San Diego, California 92111

CATEGORY: motocross

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2805

ENGINE

Type	two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement	one reed-valve-controlled intake, four transfers, one booster transfer, one exhaust
Bore and stroke	86.0mm x 74.0mm
Displacement	428.8cc
Compression ratio (uncorrected)	11.1:1
Carburetion	one 38mm Mikuni slide/needle
Air filter	washable oiled foam element
Lubrication	pre-mixed fuel and oil
Starting system	primary kick
Ignition	internal-rotor magneto CDI
Charging system	none

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive	straight-cut gears; 1.795:1 ratio
Clutch	wet, multi-plate
Final drive	#530 chain (⅝-in. pitch, ⅜-in. width); 4.417:1 (53/12) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.357	18.686	4.1
II	1.706	13.523	5.8
III	1.300	10.306	7.4
IV	1.043	8.272	8.3
V	0.880	6.976	11.0
VI	0.778	6.166	12.4

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front	air-spring, 40mm stanchion tube diameter/ 11.8 in. (300mm)
Rear	8-way adjustable spring preload/ 11.3 in. (287mm)

BRAKES

Front	drum, single-leading shoe
Rear	drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated

TIRES

Front	3.00 x 21 Trelleborg Motocross Deep Grip T544
Rear	5.00 x 17 Trelleborg Ten Masters Motocross T744

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight	236 lbs. (107kg)
Weight distribution	46.2% front, 53.8% rear
Wheelbase	58.5 to 59.3 in. (1486 to 1506mm)
Seat height	38.0 in. (965mm)
Handlebar width	34.0 in. (834mm)
Footpeg height	13.8 in. (351mm)
Ground clearance	12.5 in. (318mm), at engine cradle
Steering head angle	30.5 degrees from vertical
Front-wheel trail	5.98 in. (152mm)
Frame	tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube
Fuel tank	aluminum, 2.0 gal. (7.5*l*), no reserve
Instrumentation	none

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (calculated)	91 mph (146 kph)

WARRANTY: 30 days, motor and frame only

AVAILABLE COLOR: Burgundy Red

All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make & Model	Horse-power	Wheel Travel Front/Rear, in.	Weight (fuel tank empty), lb.	Weight bias, Front/Rear, percent	Transmission, number of speeds
Husqvarna 430CR	NA	11.8/11.3	236	46.2/53.8	6
Yamaha YZ465H	39.8	11.0/12.4	235	47.2/52.8	5
Suzuki RM465X	36.0	10.4/10.8	234	46.7/53.3	5
Honda CR450R	NA	11.0/12.5	236	47.3/52.7	4
Kawasaki KX420	34.0	11.0/11.3	250	46.4/53.6	5
Can-Am 400 MX6	38.3	11.5/10.8	233	45.5/54.5	5

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MINITEST:

Yamaha XV750 Virago

The marketing success that fit America to a vee.

• In the crystal clarity of hindsight, the only surprising thing about Yamaha's XV750 Virago is that it took so long for the Japanese to do it. As *the* sales success for Yamaha in 1981, the bike has shown an uncanny ability to trigger the human hand to write a check.

The "why" is simple: Just take a look. While Yamaha might openly disavow any intentions of building a Japanese Harley, the marketing goal is clear. And Yamaha claims its dealers have received an astonishing number of Harley-Davidson trade-ins. So much for disavowal. Dennis Stefani, Manager of Yamaha's Marketing Division, mentions "dissatisfied Harley buyers," riders who bought Milwaukee iron because they wanted one particular motorcycle statement but tired of hassles not normally associated with Japanese machinery.

He goes on to identify the "typical" Virago buyer as 33 years old—street-bike buyers average 27-28, and those for 750s are around 29-30—with a higher income than the norm. Stefani classifies Virago buyers as people who "were into bikes, dropped out, and never saw anything that turned them on until the Virago." You can't get exact or even approximate sales figures on the XV750—"the potential we want to keep secret," he says—but he calls it "without a doubt, the most instant success model we've ever had . . . We sold out all we made," adds Stefani, and "we plan to more than double the sales for 1982."

What is it about this motorcycle that caused it to sell out so early that dealers could order 1982 models by July 15? Or that television commercials for the '82 model were being aired by the middle of August? A re-engineered "tradition" is what, fitting the American concept of a motorcycle to a vee; refined, reliable, involving less fuss, and scoring big because it has the *look*.

That style draws attention anywhere. Bystanders stop to gawk, while other riders invariably want to know how the XV stacks up to . . . you know. The XV's style fits freeway brawls, city streets or cruiser nightlife equally well, in a way that goes directly from the eyeballs to touch a spot inside.

But to write off the Virago's entire appeal as the *look*, to dismiss the XV750 as just another street cruiser, but one that goes *putt putt*, is to miss the issue. Marketing hype aside, the Virago has succeeded because it's a likeable, *good* motorcycle. And the '82 model, largely unchanged from last year's, doesn't alter the formula. Unless you've just got to have H-D bits-and-pieces styling and 80 cubic inches thumping away, the Virago can add up to a better deal. And at $3199, up from $2995 in 1981, a cheaper one as well.

Though it's not particularly fast as 750s go, the XV750 has highly usable performance that suits traffic-cutting perfectly, making it a terrific city motorcycle. The vee-twin starts easily and soon settles down to a lumpy cadence at idle, while shaft drive eliminates chain maintenance for those 33-year-old riders, and air suspension with adjustable damping on the Monoshock smooths freeway expansion joints. Aside from being in a select group of street-going single-shockers, the 750 Virago is in an even more unique group: one of few come-lately street cruisers that is actually comfortable. This happened because the seat was dropped and the handlebar pulled back in the initial design stage, not after the fact. Sitting conveniently close to the ground, with a surprisingly good upright seating position, you're on a narrow, agile, maneuverable bike with steamer trunks of torque. In a nutshell, the XV750 is the best lane-splitter in the world.

Glitches are minor and few. Most noticeable is a 2.4-gallon fuel tank, which forces stops at intervals not much over 100 miles. Chalk up the smallish tank as a concession to style. But count it also as the right approach for the times. By all accounts, the 750 Virago is precisely what substantial numbers of buyers have been wanting but not finding. As a high-style, boogie-down, nighttime-is-the-right-time street cruiser, it's the first real effort from Japan, and arguably the best from anywhere. That the Virago is also a good motorcycle just sweetens the deal.

—Don Fuller

YAMAHA XV750 VIRAGO

Importer: Yamaha Motor Corporation, USA
6555 Katella Avenue
Cypress, California 90630

Category	street
Suggested retail price	$3199
Engine type	four-stroke tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement	single overhead camshaft
Bore and stroke	83.0mm x 69.2mm
Displacement	748.8cc
Compression ratio	8.7:1
Carburetion	two 40mm HSC constant-vacuum
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	air-spring, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/5.6 in. (142mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	air-spring Monoshock, 6-way adjustable rebound damping/4.1 in. (104mm)
Wheelbase	60.0 in. (1520mm)
Seat height	29.8 in. (757mm)
Weight	481 lbs. (218kg)
Top speed (calculated)	105 mph (169 kph)
Fuel consumption	43 to 48 mpg (18 to 20 km/l)
Warranty	6 months unlimited mileage
Available colors	Star Silver or black

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Nighttime might be the right time to cruise the Virago down Mainstreet

But Yamaha designed the XV750 to trigger your check-writing hand anytime.

The travel trunk detaches to travel with you. And inside there's a vanity mirror, map case and quilted liner.
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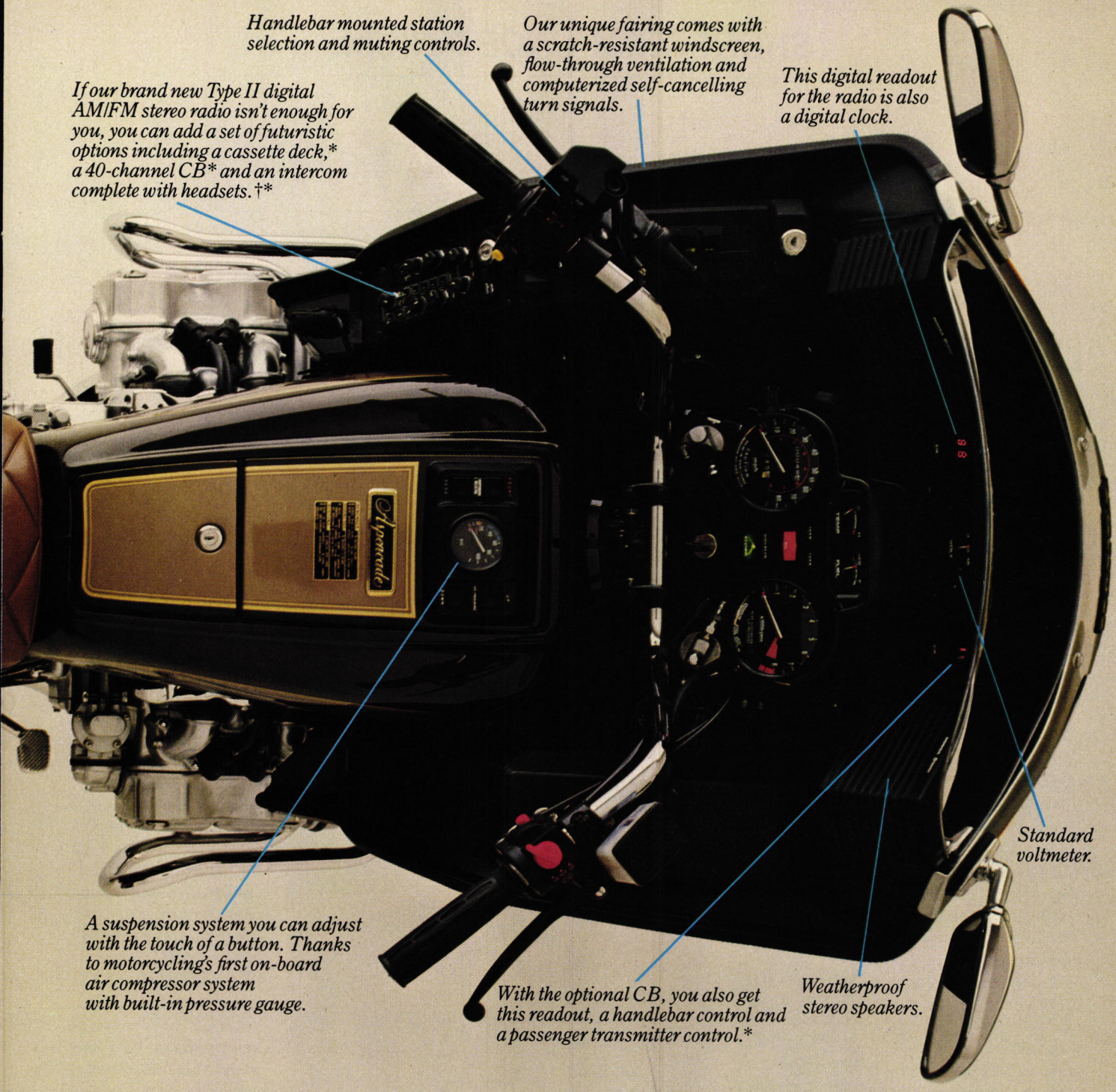
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†Headsets sold only in those states where permitted by law.

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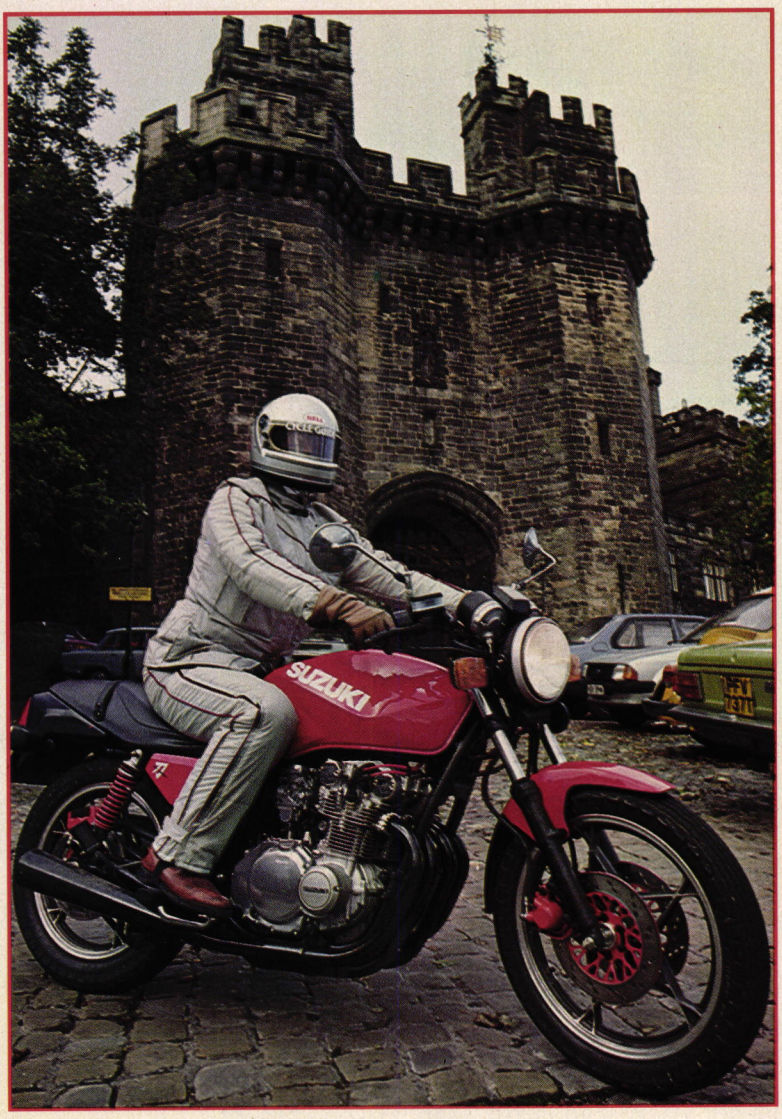
SHORT-TERM UNOBTANIUM:

Suzuki GS550MZ

Not available in stores . . . yet.

BY LARRY WORKS



Devices crafted of unobtanium have always been imbued with rare, mythic qualities. Motorcycles labeled "not available in stores" are no exception. Oftimes the element of unavailability enhances a motorcycle's capacity to excite, to attract attention, adding a tinge of exclusivity to a bike's natural qualities—even to the point of making a good bike seem better.

Suzuki's GS550M is one such unavailable machine—but with a twist. The bike has been for sale for months in Europe, a land rich with pockets of unobtanium, and has already stirred the desires of motorcyclists on these shores. The aura of absence lingers, despite Suzuki's well-publicized plans to offer the bike—or one enough like it to pass muster—for U.S. sale early in 1982. But unobtanium is nothing if not true to itself, even in the face of impending availability. So for the moment, anyway, the 550M is still shrouded in essence of can't-have. Think of the 550M—or 550 Katana, if that rolls more easily off the tongue—as pure unobtanium, but with a half-life measured in weeks, not years.

We at CYCLE GUIDE admit to a fascination with all things motorcycle, unobtanium included. And with an eye toward immediacy, mining this lode *before* it turned into some more-common metal, we headed to a known vein—in this case the Suzuki dealership of Eddie Crooks, Barrow-In-Furness, Cumbria, Great Britain. And to help build a frame of reference for the Katana, we secured a Kawasaki GPz550, a bike that we are familiar with (see full Road Test, September 1981 issue), for comparative purposes.

From the outset, it was clear that the starting points of each bike's design philosophies were some distance apart. Both motorcycles are 550-class sportbikes, true, and in this case both are a flagrant red, but from there the paths track in different directions. The long, tall, flowing shapes of the GS contrast sharply with the more-abrupt angles of the Kawasaki. And the 550M dwarfs the pocket-rocket GPz, making any comparison seem—literally—stretched out of proportion. If you had to pigeonhole both machines after only seeing them side-by-side, the GPz would probably emerge with the mantle of Sunday afternoon box-stock contender, while the GS550M seems destined for something less frenetic; a task in part like the GPz's, but aimed at other goals as well.

That "something" about the M is not in the least indefinable. Motorcycles like it have for years been called GT bikes. GT—shortspeak for Gran Touring—denotes a kind of riding apart from the hot, fast sprint that the GPz conjures. The admixture necessary for a proper GT bike includes not only the ability to stop, go and handle like a sportbike, but also the provision for a riding platform that enables a rider to push hard—over any kind of pavement—for hundreds of miles. Long-haul sport touring, if you will. In short, speed with comfort.

Comfort on a motorcycle is to a large degree determined by ergonomics, the fitting of machine to man. And the true sign of well-planned ergonomics lies not in the dilettante's arm-

Continued

PHOTOGRAPHY ©1982 DAVID DEWHURST

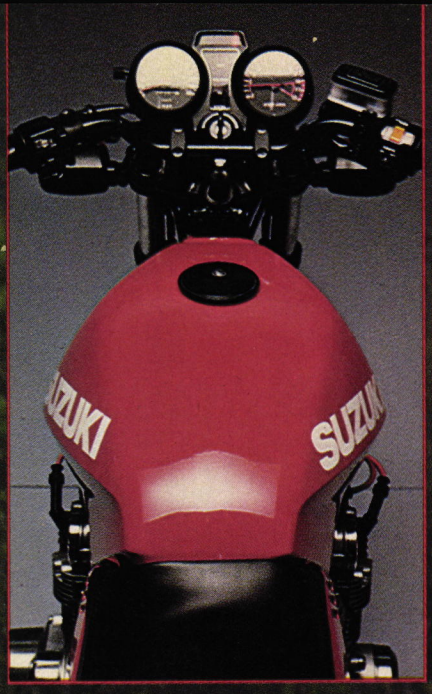
chair opinion from the warmth of a garage (which, in the case of the 550M, is that the bike seems to fit a wide array of body types perfectly) but what the rider can say hours later, with hundreds of miles under his belt, swallowed whole. Suzuki's 550 Katana not only passes the real-world test, it joins the Euro-650 Yamaha, another Europe-first bike, at the paradigm of GT ergonomics.

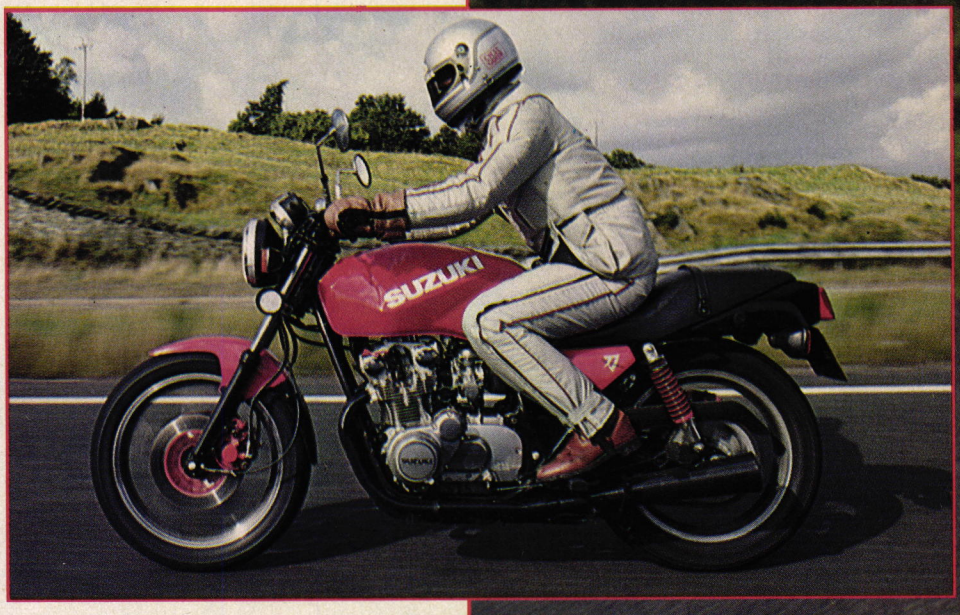
In producing the 550M, Suzuki designers constructed a seating position that, while still placing the rider *in* the machine, affords considerable room for movement. Anything from arms and back straight, with all the bend squarely at the waist, to a full-on roadracy drape, just barely outboard of the fuel tank's paintjob—all despite having a limited range of movement on the low, sculpted seat itself. Rider weight in the saddle of the 550M isn't centered on the base of the spine, as on some bikes that force a more-upright posture, but is spread over the entire contact patch between seat and riding pants, with a good deal of it centered at the insides of the thighs. A long reach isn't required to bridge the 5.1-gallon tank (though some forward cant is necessary), and while there's more weight concentrated on the arms and wrists than on a Mark-One streetbike, the burden isn't excessive. And with the slight tilt forward, both feet are naturally aimed at the rearset footpegs, offering cramp-free positioning for the rider's legs. The result of all this sound ergonomic thinking put into the GS550 in the design stages is the ability to sail past milepost after milepost—on any combination of street, highway or backroad—without flogging the rider. GTness.

But while the GS550M's air of Gran Touring seems new—for the 550, at least—the M's running gear beneath the bodywork should appear far more familiar. Despite the M's high-style finish, a beancounter's input on the bike is evident. Rather than recast the 550 engine as a 16-valve TSCC rocket, Suzuki elected to retain much of the machinery that has proven itself on the 550 since 1976. Which means, in the M's case, that the engine and frame remain largely unchanged. The motive power is still the same 549cc, eight-valve, six-speed four that's always done the pushing. The last major re-engineering that went into the 550 was in 1980, when transistorized electronic ignition and tapered-roller steering head bearings worked their way onboard.

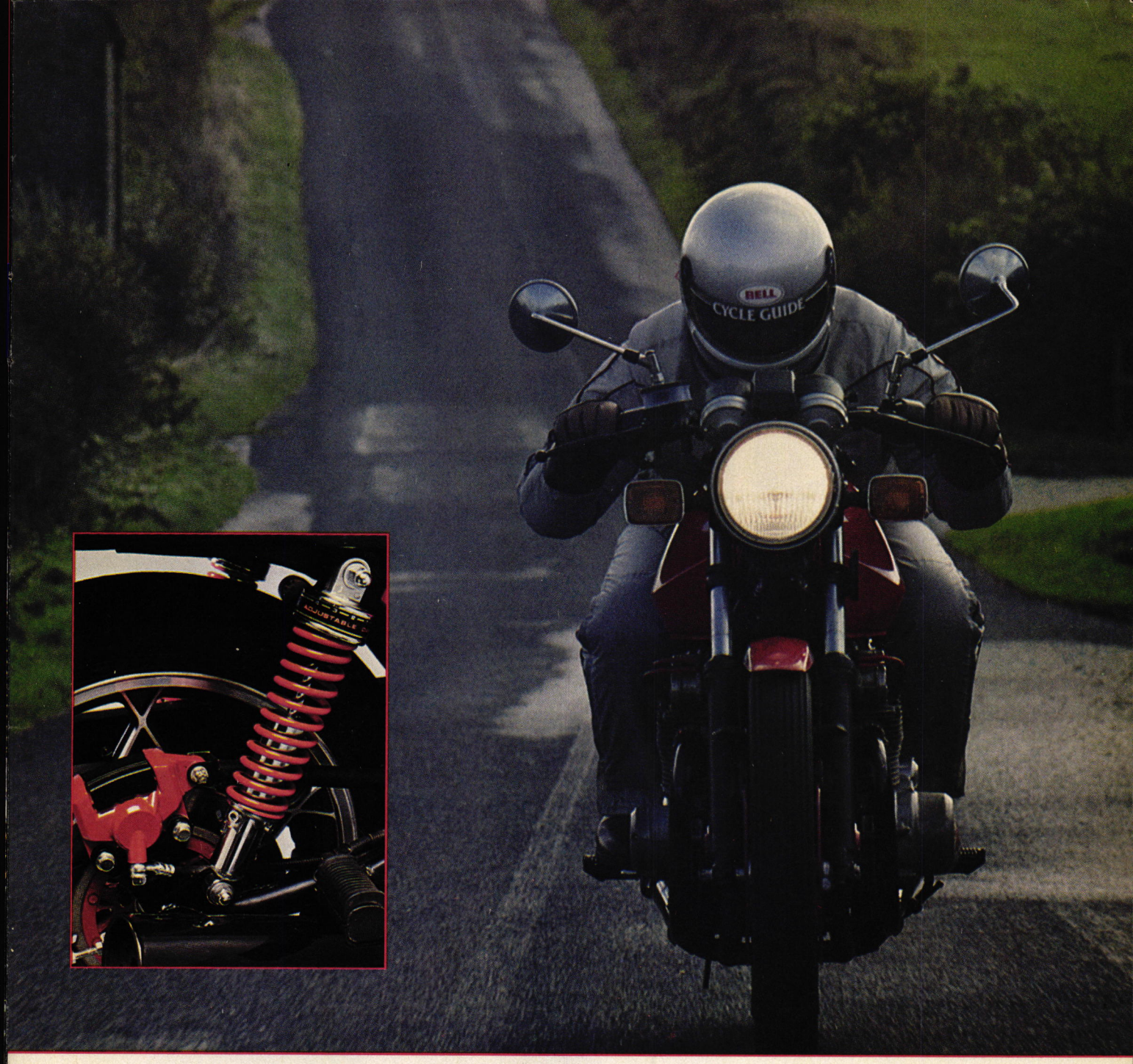
It would be easy enough, then, to dismiss the 550M as simply new facepaint applied to an aging starlet, but that's a deliberately elitist point of view. And one that also closes the mind to many of the M's virtues. Using the tried-and-proven mechanicals of the existing 550 enhanced by the Katana bodywork, rather than starting from the ground up, allowed Suzuki to price the M for U.S. sale at $2595, considerably under the expected 1982 price for some 550 sportbikes. More to the point, though, something about the combination of familiar Suzuki hardware and the M's styling/ergonomics package flat *works*.

Much of the reason the 550M seems right leads back to the ergonomics again. They not only look the part, they perform. The M is one of few streetbikes in recent years that won't force the rider to fumble around for the passenger footpegs after only a few highway miles. On the M, there's simply no need. The styled indentations at the rear of the tank make it easy to apply a knee-hug, while the placement of the low handlebar banishes any cramps at the hands, wrists or elbows. In fact, the worst discomfort the M dishes out is the beginning of a strain at the underside of the forearm as it joins the elbow, and that's only after hours in the saddle. Further, the M's seating position is so spot-on that it doesn't rely on wind pressure on the rider's chest to lighten the weight the wrists must absorb. The result is that the rider never has to suffer the creeping effects of shatterhand, no matter what his riding speed. And while the clutch and front brake levers fall neatly to hand on the slightly dropped bar, as the saying goes, the shifter and rear brake pedals fall neatly to foot.





Which is fortunate, since having to reach for the shifter as often as the M requires could get old fast. In keeping the existing 550 engine more or less intact, despite a two-degree advance on the ignition timing for all 1982 GS550s, Suzuki also kept the 550's traditional power curve, which has always been of the low-torque, high-rpm variety. As a result, considerable gearshifting is required to put the M through its paces. Situations that would normally call for only a handful of throttle on other middleweight bikes require not only a twist of the throttle, but a downshift or two as



well on the M. Strangely, though, while other GS550s have been criticized for requiring a lot of hand/toe work to keep on top of the powerband, it doesn't play out as an annoyance on the Katana; it's simply a given. One of the offsetting factors is that shifting the M is a simple one-step dance; it doesn't require a movement to get to the shifter first. Another is that despite the linkage required to rearset the shifter, the GS550M changes ratios like all Suzuki streetbikes of recent vintage: crisply, and with a short, positive throw. And finally, something about being surrounded by the trappings of *painless* playracing makes rowing the gearbox seem like simply part of the deal.

That was amply played out on the winding, twisting roads of England, where the differences between M and GPz were made even more obvious. On any stretch of road even resembling a straightaway, the GPz squirted far ahead, making full use of its better roll-on power. The M rider made up his ground through the turns. Trade riders, same conclusion. The proper technique for cornering the M is to keep the throttle on at all costs, relying on the bike's inherent stability and compliant suspension to insure a fast exit. And at the end of any 20-, 50- or 100-mile flat-out run through the narrow backroads, half-sized lanes littered with sweepers, decreasing-radius surprises and blind jumps—not much short of a TT road course, really—the conclusion was inescapable. On that surface, a combination of fast and slow, full-on throttle and full-on braking, with quick side-to-side flicks and long-laid-over transitions, the Suzuki was invariably ahead of or dead-even with the GPz. Its combination of balanced doses of good handling, braking, and the direct feel the rider has for the bike's motions overcomes an engine deficiency that—in the case of the GPz—should have put the M clean out of the running.

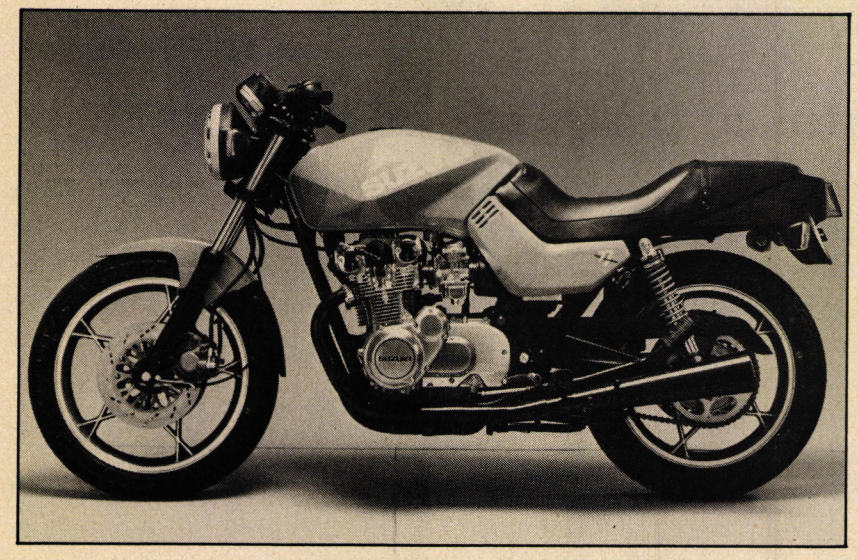
Keeping the M taching anywhere from 6000 rpm to its 9500-rpm redline is the only

Continued

way to keep it in the running, though. And keeping the M revved to where it's happy working also produces a steady, low-amplitude, high-frequency hum that works its way back to the rider through all contact points with the bike. The vibration never reaches numbing proportions, but it's always *there*, whenever the engine is worked hard. Of course, that's likely to be the M's natural state, if only because its steady-state steering invites fast passes through the twisties. Take the right line, the wrong line or even change lines someplace midway through, and the M still tracks cleanly, without complaint.

How all this applies to the U.S. rider is worth considering, because while the Euro-M will not appear in U.S. dealerships in the next few weeks, a near-clone will. Suspension rates on the U.S. model are expected to be calibrated for a somewhat softer ride to accommodate the expansion joints on U.S. freeways. But while the Euro-M has two-way-adjustable fork preload, the U.S. model arrives with air caps. Carburetion, too, can be expected to be tuned to U.S. spec, which will undoubtedly be an EPA-pleasing lean. The most-noticeable difference, though, won't be one of performance but one of hue. There will still be an element of unobtanium in the 550 Katana, since Euroriders get a choice of either red bodywork with a solid-black seat or silver with two-tone seat that's basically black with a two-tone panel that matches the orange on the disc rotors, shock springs and plug wires. But American buyers can have any color combination they want—as long as it's the silver with two-tone. Still, that shouldn't

Suzuki GS550MZ



SPECIFICATIONS:

IMPORTER: Suzuki G.B. Ltd.
Beddington Lane,
Croydon, Surrey, England

CATEGORY: street

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2595 American

ENGINE
Type ..... four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement ..... double overhead camshafts
Bore and stroke ..... 56.0mm x 55.8mm
Displacement 549.7cc
Compression ratio 8.6:1
Carburetion ..... four 32mm Mikuni constant-vacuum
Air filter ..... washable oiled foam element
Lubrication ..... wet sump
Starting system ..... electric only
Ignition ..... transistorized breakerless
Charging system ..... 12-volt; alternator, voltage regulator, rectifier

DRIVETRAIN
Primary drive ..... helical gears; 1.977:1 ratio
Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate
Final drive ..... #530 chain (⅝-in. pitch, ⅜-in. width); 3.333:1 (50/15) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.667	17.576	4.3
II	1.778	11.171	6.7
III	1.381	9.102	8.2
IV	1.174	7.737	9.7
V	1.045	6.890	10.9
VI	0.957	6.304	11.9

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL
Front ..... 2-way adjustable spring preload, 35mm stanchion tube diameter/5.7 in. (145mm)
Rear ..... 4-way adjustable rebound damping, 5-way adjustable spring preload/3.3 in. (85mm)

BRAKES
Front ..... dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.8-in. (275mm) discs
Rear ..... double-action hydraulic caliper, 10.8-in. (275mm) disc

TIRES
Front ..... 3.25H19 Dunlop Gold Seal F8 tubeless
Rear ..... 3.75H18 Dunlop Gold Seal K127 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES
Weight ..... 458 lbs. (208kg)
Weight distribution ..... 42.1% front, 57.9% rear
Wheelbase ..... 57.1 to 58.3 in. (1450 to 1480mm)
Seat height ..... 30.7 in. (780mm)
Handlebar width ..... 26.8 in. (680mm)
Footpeg height ..... 12.2 in. (310mm)
Ground clearance ..... 6.7 in. (170mm), at exhaust pipe
Steering head angle ..... 28.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail ..... 4.53 in. (115mm)
Frame ..... tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity ..... 2.8 qt. (2.7l)
Fuel tank ..... steel, 5.1 gal. (19.3l)
Instrumentation ..... speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer

PERFORMANCE
Top speed (estimated) ..... 103 mph (166 kph)
Fuel consumption ..... 41 mpg (17 km/l)
Range, maximum ..... 209 miles (336km)

WARRANTY: 12 months unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLORS: red or silver

All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty

change the elemental character of the bike, since the thoughtful mating of machine to rider, the delicate connection that seems to turn every rider input into a corresponding motorcycle action, remains unchanged.

If you've been taking notes, then, what the 550M adds up to is either: one, a low-priced rehash of an existing model with sporty styling; or two, a low-priced sportbike substantially improved by its styling/ergonomics package, that could easily appeal to the more sophisticated tastes of a seasoned rider. One who appreciates that the price difference between the M and some of its 550-class competition could go a long way toward heating up the Katana's engine performance. Of course, all this is still speculation about the motorcycle that *you* can buy, since no 550M has yet seen the harsh light of a U.S. dealership—or the harsh appraisal of U.S. buyers who will ride the bike on U.S. roads. But when the unobtanium of the GS550M finally goes public, don't get caught standing in the doorway. There's liable to be a gold rush. •

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Naturally, we don't confine our interest to one kind of motorcycling. For instance, we think there's nothing in all the world more fun than doing cross-ups with the spectacular MX machinery available today. Not to mention dodging trees and rocks in enduros. In fact, if it's something you can do with a motorcycle off-road, we're sure to do it.

Which doesn't mean, of course, that we don't work the other side of the trees. Whenever we can, we turn our lively and exhaustive street tests into staff rides, blitzing the twisties and eating up thousands of miles in touring. Because we love street motorcycles as much as dirt bikes.

Just like you.

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Some people seem to think you can't have fun on anything that doesn't have a handful of cylinders and eyeball-squashing power. And some people think that God meant Man only to ride bikes with seven-speed gearboxes and a teacup-full of engine. We're not like either group. We can have fun testing and writing about anything with two wheels and a motor, from crypto-chopper to minibike. So our entire staff is totally conversant with the whole motorcycle spectrum, from tiddler to terror. And consequently, whatever your preferences in displacement and power, you'll find them within the pages of CYCLE GUIDE.

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Riding & Writing

Ours is a staff of expert riders. Qualified to ride or race almost anything. But it's not our ability to turn hot laps that makes us proud of our work. It's our ability to turn hot licks on the typewriter.

That's because while there are a lot of good riders around, there aren't many who can turn the experience of riding into something others can share and delight in. Or learn from. So we've been very selective about who writes for us, making sure that riding skill is matched by writing skill. The result isn't Shakespeare, but we think our ways of taking you along with us over the jumps, across the apexes and through the woods on two wheels are better than anyone's in the business.

Including Shakespeare.

Them & Us

There are a lot of motorcycle magazines on your newsstand. Some specialize in dirt bikes, some in street bikes, others in choppers. Some are very nice to flip through in idle moments. And like you, because we're full-on motorcyclists, we flip through them too, occasionally even finding something we like to read. But like you, we think there's a world of difference between an "occasional" magazine and one that delivers the kind of excitement, enjoyment and insight we'd feel good about spending our money on.

The occasional magazines are still in the rack. You're holding the one that we know delivers the goods every month.

CYCLE GUIDE

HARD RIDERS WITH THE RIGHT LINES.

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Foothills Motocross Game

Tabletop berm-shootin'.

• Dewhurst was the first to roll. His squinty eyes suddenly widened behind his goggles as the ball banked around the turn and came to rest near the bold number six. He had the holeshot. Both Diotte and Works struggled off the line with less success, Works pulling four spaces while Diotte was relegated to third place by a lowly two-space roll. Dewhurst was the easy favorite. He rolled for the second time and once again it was a six, putting him even farther in front of the competition. This was going to be so easy.

But then the red flag came out. Diotte had spilled Gatorade all over the first turn. While the mess was being mopped up, Works read through the instructions for the Foothills Motocross game once more. Two to four racers can play, and the game incorporates a small degree of skill rather than blind luck. The "Guideway" is a plastic flattrack-shaped device around which each player rolls a ball to determine the number of spaces to advance on the three-dimensional track. In other variations of the game, a player doesn't advance until he rolls the specific number he is aiming for, and then it's only one space. But in game four, the variation we played, racers can advance up to six spaces, but must avoid the dreaded challenge squares. The squares, which are white cards placed face-down at various intervals, can cost you a turn because of a broken footpeg or even put you out of the race.

To make the game more interesting, we made some challenge squares of our own. In addition to the usual broken chains, shocks and pegs, we had a card that said "Scoring foul-up; swap places with the rider in last place," and another saying "Let Broc by; rider behind you gets to roll twice." Enough pitfalls in the game make it a challenge just to finish, let alone win.

Dewhurst was still in the lead after the game was restarted, but soon the race was getting closer. Works and Diotte were only one space back, locking handlebars in the same turn. It was going to come down to a photo finish. Dewhurst rolled a five and moved his piece forward with apprehension as he realized that he was going to land on a challenge square. Then he turned the white plastic card over and discovered he had thrown a chain and would lose one turn. Then it was up to Works, who rolled and came up with a six. As Diotte was left coughing in the dust, Works flew past the downed Dewhurst and into the lead. But then disaster struck. Works landed on another challenge card and had to drop out of the race with a blown engine. That left Diotte with a sure win in sight. Before the checkered flag could come out, however, Works accidentally knocked the game off of the table and stomped it into unrecognizable plastic fragments. But then that's racing.

Foothills Motocross Game is available for $12.95 from Foothills Manufacturing Company, 968 Enterprise Street, Orange, California 92667. —*Ron Lawson*

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Foothills' Motocross game goes one step beyond benchracing

Do not cross finish, do not collect trophy.

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MINITEST:

Honda MB5

Annihilate mopeds. Laugh at bicycles. And watch out for cars.

• It just had to happen. With sport motorcycles coming in smaller and smaller sizes and mopeds enjoying unprecedented popularity, a convergence of the two trends was inevitable.

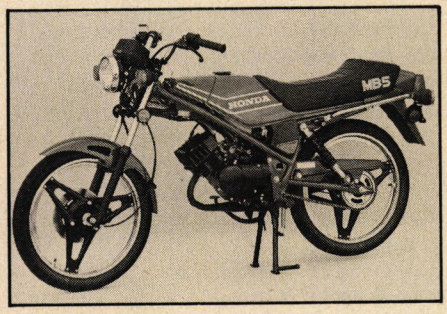
Enter the 172-pound, 49cc Honda MB5, the smallest roadster to be officially designated "a high-performance motorcycle" by its manufacturer. The laughter that particular idea starts is halted, at least temporarily, by the bike's appearance. Its flat-black engine and exhaust pipe exude raciness, and the overall styling—from the vented front fender to the sleek tail section behind the solo seat—is aggressively confident. With a low handlebar, steel ComStar wheels, front disc brake, five-speed transmission and a tantalizing 10,500-rpm redline, this Honda has all the goodies you'd expect in a mini-hyperbike. And its willing, slightly undersquare two-stroke engine pumps out power at the impressive rate of 129 hp per liter.

Which is perfectly okay with Honda. The company is only seeking your attention for the MB5 if you're youthful, eager, extremely imaginative and have big hopes and a small budget. With this marketing aim in mind, the MB5's potent designation begins to make sense. If you ride a two-horsepower moped, or a one-humanpower bicycle, or—worst of all—depend on parents for wheels, the MB5's performance is high enough to make you power-mad: Its claimed 6.33 hp is about triple that of the average moped; and its status and mobility advantages over pedaling and parental transportation are obvious. Unsolicited, enthusiastic comments from teenagers indicate that Honda's focus is nearly perfect.

Unfortunately, this enthusiasm might not survive the experience of actually riding the MB5. Despite its racy looks and efficient use of small displacement, it's still only a 50, and the lack of reserve power shows up in any ride in traffic. Only with the utmost alertness—and the most relentless stirring of the shift lever and twisting of the throttle—can the MB5 be made to adjust to speed changes in the traffic flow. This isn't critical in the placid suburbs, but in city areas, especially during rush hour, the rider of an MB5 is in for numerous and unpleasant adrenaline rushes.

If you're one of the people Honda wants to put on an MB5, though, your budding glands probably have adrenaline to spare. The bike is both faster and better equipped to deal with traffic than any moped, with true motorcycle controls and behavior. But remember: A high-performance 50 is like an ant; it's only strong for its size, and its size is very small.

—Tash Matsuoka



High-performance looks in a 49cc size

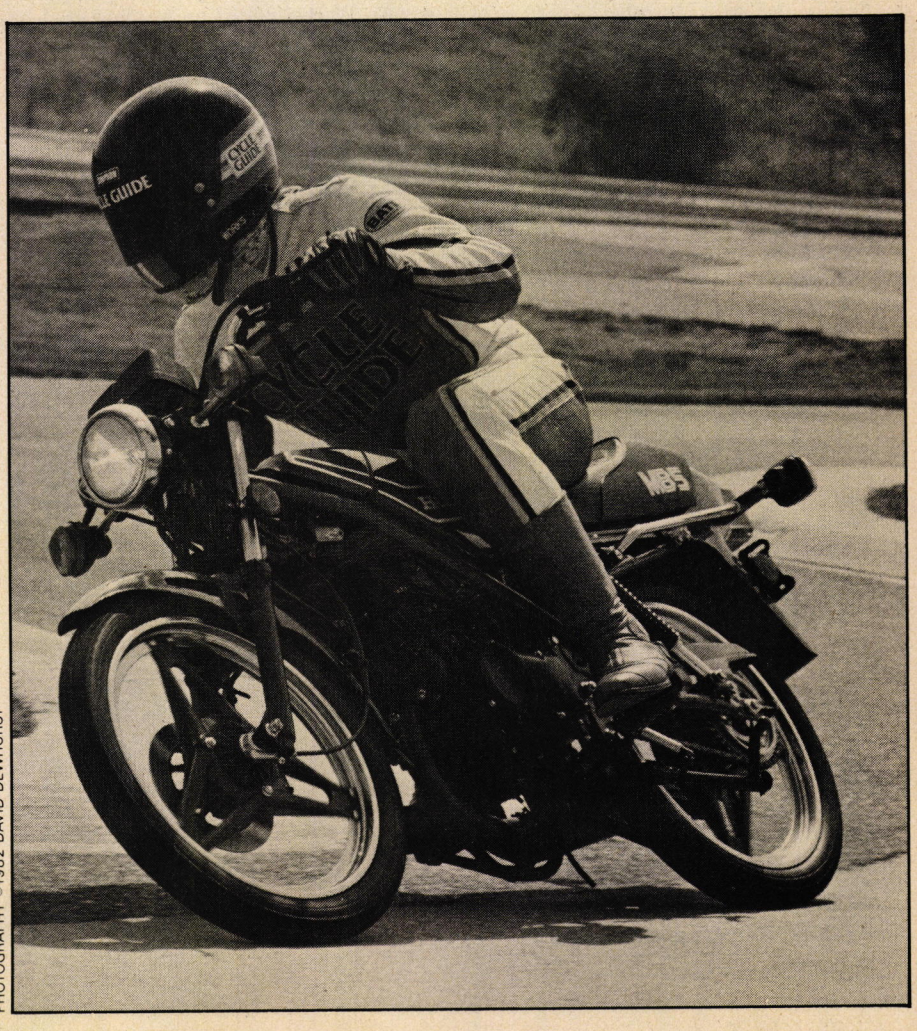
129 hp per liter is 6.33 hp per MB5.

HONDA MB5

Importer: American Honda Motor Company
100 West Alondra Boulevard
Gardena, California 90247

Category	street
Suggested retail price	$798
Engine type	two-stroke single inclined 40 degrees from vertical
Port arrangement	one reed-valve-controlled intake, four transfers, one booster transfer, one exhaust
Bore and stroke	39.0mm x 41.4mm
Displacement	49.5cc
Compression ratio (corrected)	7.6:1
Carburetion	one 16mm Keihin slide/needle
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	27mm stanchion tube diameter/4.5 in. (114mm)
Rear shocks/wheel travel	5-way adjustable spring preload/4.0 in. (102mm)
Wheelbase	47.8 in. to 48.5 in. (1214 to 1232mm)
Seat height	30.0 in. (762mm)
Weight	187 lbs. (85kg)
Top speed (observed)	57 mph (92 kph)
Warranty	6 months unlimited mileage
Available colors	black or red

But fast looks and fancy numbers don't do the talking for high performance. *That* speaks for itself, or it doesn't speak at all. In the MB5's case, high performance is clearly speaking a foreign language. With a 135-pound rider, the MB5 tops-out at about 57 mph, though the practical street maximum is closer to 45. This produces another, less impressive set of figures: There are more numbers on the speedometer face than the needle can reach. For most of us, that will end the MB5's high-performance pretensions.



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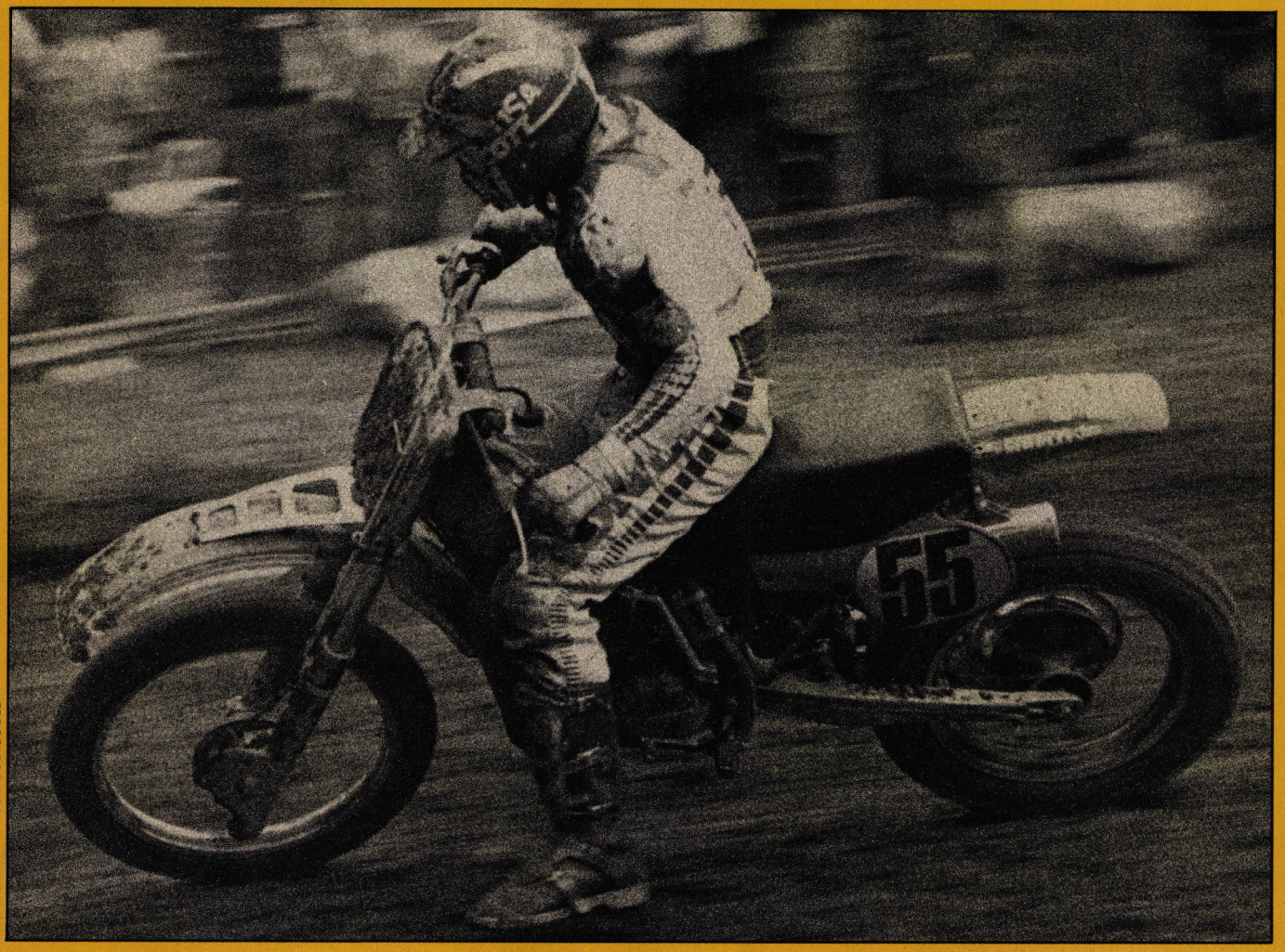
SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Race Courses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

EDITED BY DAIN GINGERELLI

American Champions

Cinderella finally gets to dance at the ball.



PHOTOGRAPHY ©1982 BOB GOULD

Question: "What do Donnie Hansen, Danny LaPorte, Johnny O'Mara, Chuck Sun and two World Motocross Championships have in common?"
Answer: "Donnie and Johnny who?"

* * * *

• Once upon a time—which means from 20 years ago up to the autumn of 1981—invitations to the victory banquet at the Trophee and Motocross des Nations were restricted to "Europeans Only." You see, it was their party after all, and well, why be hasty about admitting new members into the club? At least not until their breeding has been thoroughly established.

Sure, America fielded seven teams over nine years prior to 1981. Bad Brad went over. So did Bimbo and the Jammer and Tony D. Those four, by the way, managed a second place at the 500cc MX des Nations in 1974. For the most part, though, U.S. teams of the Seventies were distinguished by patriotic fervor, little money and even less notice. Late in the decade, apathy set in.

"I've seen problems every year we've gone over there," says Brian Lunniss, a Honda mechanic experienced in European moto-warfare. "We've been a laugh-

Continued

ingstock, and I thought this year would be more of the same old BS, too."

And why not? The motocross public, it appeared, didn't much care. Europe wasn't attractive, either, to some U.S. riders: strange food, tough racetracks, bad weather, no money. To corporate heavyweights, the timing of the Trophee and MX-des was inconvenient. Just after the Nationals and before the Trans-USA? How to prepare the bikes? (Not to mention shell-out $10,000-plus per rider/mechanic for the two-week sojourn abroad. After all, money is money. Pride doesn't show on the bottom line.)

In fact, for two years prior to 1981, the AMA hadn't even sent a team, much to the chagrin of the FIM, the ruling body of international motosport. Deprived of the annual come-uppance delivered to hapless Yankee squads that dared venture across the pond, the FIM cancelled its sanction for the 1982 125cc U.S. Grand Prix. It was implicit that FIM could take the rest of its GP balls and go home, too. As it turned out, this play-or-pay message was, fortunately, sufficient to impel a few Americans to revive interest in the Trophee and MX as the 1981 season began.

"Dick Miller deserves all the credit," says AMA's Mike DiPrete, himself American's FIM jury rep at the *des twins* since 1975. "He was the guy who initiated the whole thing." Miller, editor of *Motocross Action* and sometime-sage of the sport, viewed these events with understandable dismay. "I've always thought that the factories have never realized what they could get out of this," says Miller. "The world is bigger than the U.S. But I've also known how sticky they (factories) can be about money."

Soaking the Big Four for the entire 1981 tab wouldn't succeed, Miller reasoned, so he set up "a kind of charity, in a way." The manufacturers—after some persuasion—agreed to match, dollar for dollar up to $5000 each, money that Miller could solicit from the motocross public. The matching funds were committed regardless of rider selection, resulting in a notable concession from the factories. All monies would be held by AMA.

Miller set about gathering his pot, and Larry Maiers of Hi-Point Racing Products anteed up some T-shirts to sell. Miller, with help from AMA, solicited donations, hawked shirts and generally rallied the *hoi polloi*. Amazingly, it worked.

"Not right away," Miller says, "It didn't exactly snowball. But Dirt Diggers North, the promoter of Hangtown, raised $1400, the biggest single contribution. And Ward Robinson, track owner at Unadilla, gave $1000." Supercross czar Mike Goodwin also came up with $1000, and hundreds of fans bought shirts, sent money and lined up at racetrack celebrity auctions to bid for, among other things, riders' socks hot-off-the-feet.

PHOTOGRAPHY ©1982 BOB GOULD

O'Mara, LaPorte, Sun and Hansen

American Expeditionary Forces celebrate the conquest of Europe.

By mid-July at Mid-Ohio Moto Park—ironically the site of the soon-to-be-defunct USGP—Miller had $15,000, three-fourths of his total goal. "Larry Maiers and I personally guaranteed the rest," he says. But it wasn't necessary. More than $30,000 was eventually donated.

A team was announced at Mid-Ohio, too. Mark Barnett, Broc Glover, Bob Hannah and Chuck Sun boasted 11 National championships among themselves. Two had been to the Nations before. Three of the Big Four brands were represented. A dream team.

A pipe dream, as it turned out. For reasons too painful for some to discuss—and there must be a lot of second-guessing going on even now—of the original four, only Chuck Sun went to Europe. Sun has a clause in his Honda contract, you see, which assures that he'll be sent if he's selected. He's that farsighted.

So, too, are Roger De Coster and Dave Arnold, American Honda consultant and race-team manager, respectively. When three of the four "big names" dropped out, De Coster and Arnold convinced their employer to shore-up the breach and field a team, although everybody realized that Hansen, LaPorte and O'Mara weren't likely to strike fear Over There. It was the first time any team had entered only one brand of bike. This was the youngest team ever to ride. Further, it was the 20th anniversary of the Championships; the 10th year since the U.S. had first competed.

"Who are those guys?" was heard often from Antwerp to Lommel, Belgium, the week preceeding the 250cc Trophee. Though 14 teams had arrived, the who-are-they question was pointed, not kindly, at the Americans. Two *former* National champions? Two boys who have *never* raced in Europe? Riding *Supercross* bikes? What's a Supercross? The Belgian promoter of the T-des-N called the Americans "second rate" and hedged over paying them start-money. But, since qualifiers would be held to eliminate six of 13 teams (the Belgian team was exempt), the establishment was confident that the cream would rise—and the interlopers wouldn't.

It didn't work out quite that way. Two 20-minute qualifiers were held at Lommel, a thick, sugary-sand track that saps athletes and seizes engines. Two riders from each team were placed in each qualifier. Chuck Sun won the first, with Donnie Hansen third. In qualifier two, Johnny O'Mara took second and LaPorte fourth. The U.S. team was tops, by nine points, over Sweden.

"Hash," it was said. "The Americans have burned themselves out. Qualifying means nothing, we'll see tomorrow."

Despite trackside disavowals, some significant opinions were changing. Andre Vromans, Belgium Number One, confided to De Coster how surprised he was at the Americans qualifying. "It's funny," added Brian Lunniss, Hansen's tuner, "on Saturday night after qualifying, the TV and newspapers made a complete turnaround. They said, 'Come see the Americans.' It was fantastic."

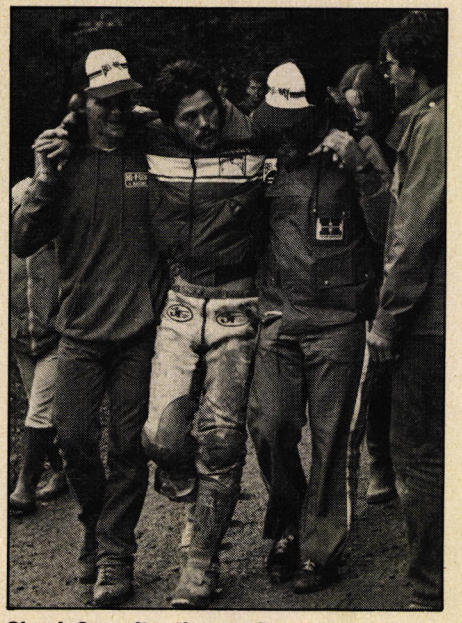
On Sunday, 32 riders from eight countries gridded for the two championship motos. Vromans won them both, but then he lives only two miles from Lommel. "The game plan was to stay away from Andre," says Lunniss, "he owns that place." The Americans didn't stay too far away as O'Mara, LaPorte and Hansen went 2-3-4 in the first moto, with Sun eighth. And though their points lead was comfortable, LaPorte, O'Mara and Sun posted 2-3-6 finishes in the second moto, with Hansen running eleventh. The U.S. devastated the

Belgian team, 20 to 37, and the rest of Europe trailed.

"It was stunning," said a Stateside Miller, who learned via trans-Atlantic telephone. "If we were going to win anywhere, that was the place to do it," said DiPrete, who was there. "This was the high point of my career," said Bel-Ray's J.J. Handfield, who acted as team manager. "It was very exciting for me," said De Coster.

The riders basked in the heady moment before realizing that they alone had a chance to sweep both titles with a win at the 500cc Motocross des Nations the next weekend in West Germany. "We can do it!" said O'Mara, who had never competed on an Open-class bike. "You could say we were pretty ecstatic after the Trophee," said Lunniss.

Thurr Coen, the Belgian Bel-Ray rep, friend of De Coster, Arnold, Miller *et al*, set about smoothing the way to Germany. He had arranged the team's transport, accommodations and American-style food for the Trophee, and by all accounts did a bang-up job. He was as assiduous for the MX-des. "We have proven it wasn't a joke," he said.



Chuck Sun after the crash

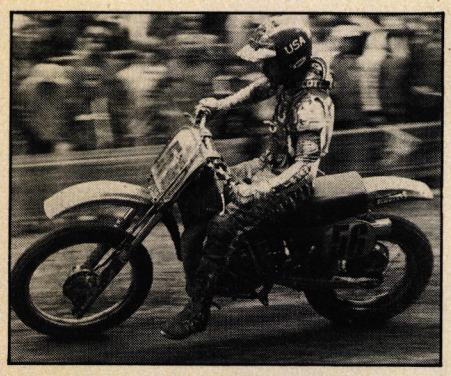
No points, but no big deal.

For his part, Mike DiPrete says, "I just hope that because of the effort everybody put in this year it will instill a little more nationalism in us all."

The members of the 1981 U.S. Trophee and Motocross des Nations team weren't looking toward next year. What they had achieved in eight magic Autumn days gave them memories to savor for a lifetime. In ensuing weeks, to be sure, they would be lionized, called "Giant Killers." Indeed, the bare fact of their accomplishment—the first World Team Motocross Championships in American history—encouraged hyperbole. They had slain the Dragon, after all. Dueled the Titan. Defied the Gods.

But for those four—Hansen, LaPorte, O'Mara and Sun—it seemed enough, and fitting, that they had given themselves "names." And earned $1500 apiece. And received silver trophies for the mantel. And, oh yes, bought a membership for America, from this time forward, in The Club.

—Jeff Burtt



Substitute rider Hansen in Germany

Second choice on first-place team.

At Bielstein, West Germany, a slippery, hard-packed track bisected by an asphalt roadway, the Americans again qualified first and on Sunday engaged in a spirited dice with the British team for the championship. LaPorte's 6-2, Hansen's 2-13 and O'Mara's 11-8 in motos were enough to outpoint the Brits 42-43. Though Chuck Sun twice threw a chain, injured his right ankle and didn't figure in the scoring, the Americans had done it again.

"I got a chill when I heard," said Miller. "Everything fell into place over there. I can't help but think that this finally establishes the U.S. in the world's eyes. Before this, Europe couldn't point to anything that indicated we were any good. Now they know different.

"The important thing," he continued, "is that the American public made it all happen. We proved that if we all get involved we can get the job done. It should get easier now that it's been done once, but I don't know if we'll see this kind of cooperation next year."

Bad luck on race day kept Sun out of the points at the Motocross des Nations

The weakest link in his assault on Bielstein proved to be the chain—twice.

Continued

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SPEEDWAY:

"He's Magic!"

So say British speedway fans about Bruce Penhall.

• For over 30 years, Europeans, Australians and New Zealanders have dominated FIM speedway racing. But that dominance ended in September of 1981 when Bruce Penhall swept the World Final at Wembley Stadium. Penhall is American.

Penhall's title chase actually had its origins at a small track in Southern California where he learned speedway racing. The track is situated in the Costa Mesa Fairgrounds, and by European measures, wouldn't be considered a site for a race at all. The Costa Mesa track is only 200 yards long, less than half the required FIM standard. But it's home to Penhall and just about every other American speedway racer in the world.

Ironically, Costa Mesa didn't originate as a speedway track. It was designed as the rodeo arena for the Orange County Fair. It still is used for that on occasion, but the facility has gained notoriety as oval-home to Penhall, Bobby Schwartz, Dennis Sigalos, Scott Autrey and the Moran brothers, Kelly and Shawn. If those names don't hit top-dead-center for you, they do for most British speedway fans. All are successful British Speedway League racers who stand up for Old Glory and drink their beer cold. Schwartz also teamed with Penhall to win the World's Best Pairs race in Europe last summer.

Penhall was brilliant this year in British League racing, too, averaging 11.34 out of a possible 12 points per meeting. Part of his brilliance is owed to Costa Mesa. He said of the tiny oval, "I think it's easier to learn there than on a longer track. You learn how to ride a bike, how to pass, and how to work the bike in and out of traffic in the turns. The longer tracks in Europe are much faster, but there's not as much passing on them." And it's Penhall's brilliance at passing in the turns that's made him a hero in England. As one Englishman said of Penhall after the World Final last September, "He's magic!"

Magic, indeed. Penhall paced himself to four straight wins in the five-heat program and needed only a third-place finish in his fifth heat to clinch the title. His mechanic spotted flakes of metal—telltale signs of trouble—in the engine oil prior to the last heat, and so he switched to his back-up Weslake, for the final heat. He finished second, winning the World Final, the first American to do so since 1937.

One month later at Costa Mesa, for the United States National he did the same thing, only reversing the order. He started the evening with a sluggish start in his first heat and finished second to seven-time national champ Mike Bast. He had reason for the poor start—only hours before the race he was in a hospital being treated for stomach flu. He came back and won his final four heats and the title.

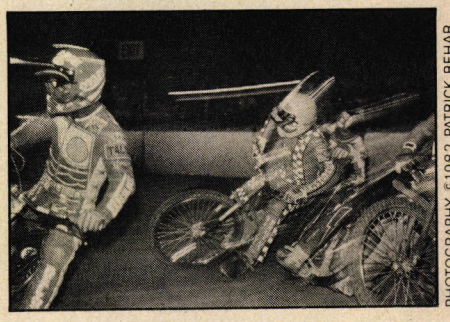
When the evening was over he said, "I settled down after the first heat and figured I could still win because nobody was going to have a perfect score." He was right, since Bast, who's generally picture-perfect on the tiny oval, faltered later on and finished with only 11 points for second place.

So Penhall added the 1981 U.S. title to the year's collection. The list includes World's Best Pairs, California State Championship, U.S. National and, of course, the World Final.

Penhall's magic act was noticed by more than just the speedway community. President Reagan sent him a telegram congratulating him on the World Final, and the city of Costa Mesa honored his homecoming race at Costa Mesa as "Bruce Penhall Day."

Despite the accolades given Penhall the Man, nothing was said about Costa Mesa the Track. Except for a comment Penhall made in the British journal Motorcycle News: "I'm not forgetting my early upbringing on the small California bowls. It was good training for me."

Penhall's more than just a champion. He's a champion with class, because he never forgets the little guys. —*Dain Gingerelli*



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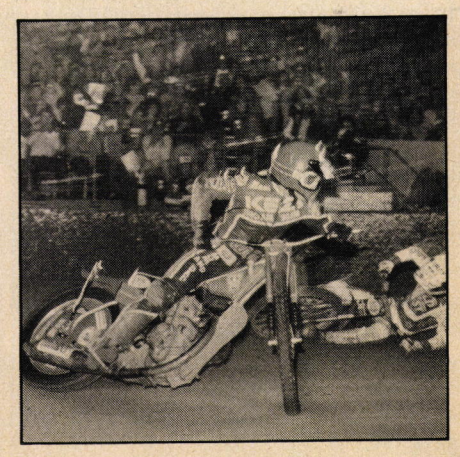
Showdown at the Fairgrounds

The crashes look worse than they are.



The Godfather

Success from blood, sweat, tears—and some strong-arm tactics.

• They call him The Godfather. His mother called him Harry Oxley. The banking community knows him as Successful. Harry Oxley, a.k.a. The Godfather, was the man most responsible for bringing speedway racing back to America following its 30-year absence after World War II.

Prior to The Big One, some of the best speedway stars came from the U.S. Pasadena-bred Jack Milne was even world champ in 1937, heading an all-star American cast to Wembley that year. But the war stopped all racing, and after armistice Americans forgot about the brakeless, one-speed racers, turning their attention instead to Class C flattracking.

Oxley was a motorcycle salesman in Milne's Pasadena Shop when he figured it would be better to have the former champ's racebikes on a track collecting trophies than in the garage collecting dust. But in order to win races, let alone trophies, there had to be organized speedway competition. In those days there was none in America. So Oxley and Milne looked for a track to run their own race. The Costa Mesa Fairgrounds facility was suitable. That was in 1969.

They hoped to break even at the box- office the first year. They didn't. They made money, and in the process discovered a gold mine in the 8,000-plus spectator arena that filled with fans every Friday evening. Oxley attributes part of the success to the track itself: "It's short and tight—there's always good racing and a lot of passing in a four-lap heat. And even though the racing speeds are slow—about 30 to 40 miles per hour—the crashes look spectacular." Oxley emphasizes *look*, then adds, "But riders seldom get hurt." It's all part of the show.

The show became a smash because of a certain announcer Oxley hired. He was Larry Huffman, and although he doesn't announce at Costa Mesa anymore, it was Huffman's voice, sounding like a tape recorder stuck on fast-forward, that stimulated the fans to cheer or boo their favorite or not-so-favorite riders. The tuxedo-clad Huffman jumped up and down and screamed and yelled from the announcer's stand at start/finish. He even tacked nicknames to the riders: Speedway fans of the Seventies remember world champion Bruce Penhall as Bruce "The Fox" Penhall—a Huffman-coined name because of Penhall's boyish face and golden locks.

It wasn't all beer and skittles for Oxley, though. There have been tough times for The Godfather, too. Like the rider's strike when several of the big-name racers refused to compete unless Oxley upped the prize money. He didn't stand for such extortion and stuck by his guns. Those riders eventually came back or retired, and The Godfather continued to head The Family.

Now he's taken to the mattresses again, this time to prepare for the biggest speedway race ever in America—the 1982 World Final. Come August 28, "Don" Oxley will have the world in his territory for the evening. That's when all contracts will be due, and the American neighborhood will become a Family Force in the speedway syndicate, or get blown away in the process. The Godfather himself even said so: "This will be the making of speedway in this country." He added with the objective skepticism you might expect from a Don, "I only hope we don't take a bath doing it, though."

—Dain Gingerelli

Continued

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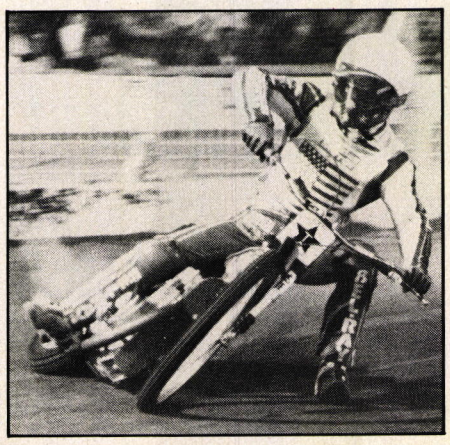
The Godfather with Hit-Man Penhall

Protecting the Costa Mesa Family.



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Penhall working magic at Wembley

Making the World Championship appear.

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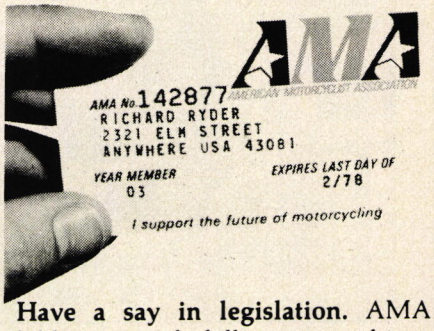

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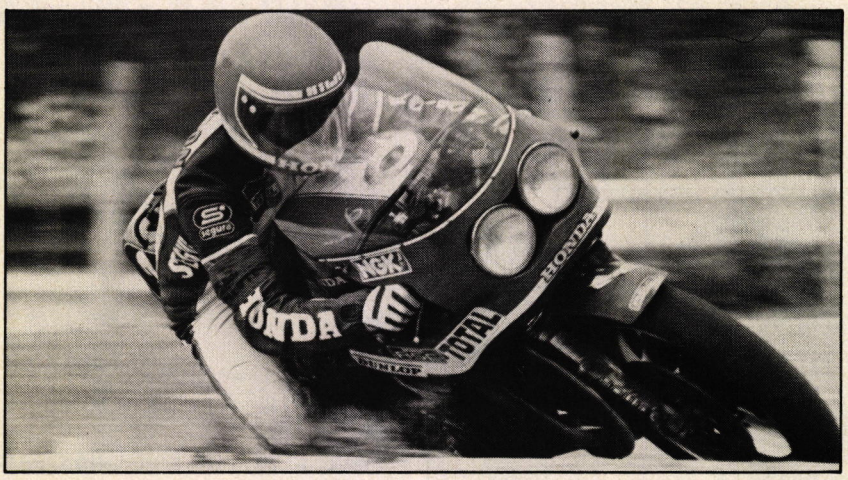
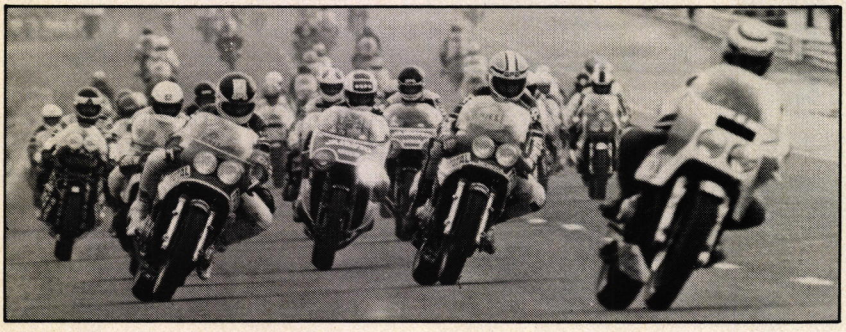


Honda's Dominique Sarron

One half of the winning team in the world-famous all-day roadrace.

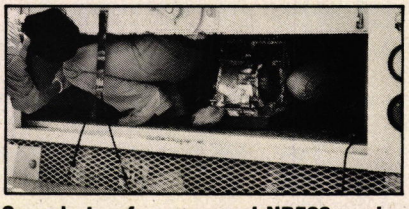


Start of the Bol d'Or 24-Hour

One day and 54 DNFs later, only 20 survivors remained.

• Honda's endurance roadrace team won the **Bol d'Or** for the fifth time, as French riders Dominique Sarron and Jean-Claude Jauberts paced their RCB1000 3544 kilometers for the all-day race. Mike **Baldwin** and Dave **Aldana**, who have spent the year riding for Honda's endurance team, jumped into the lead early on, and held first place through the evening. An **Aldana crash** dropped the Honda effort to fifth, where they finished. Of the 74 teams that started, only 20 finished the event.

• While Honda makes no secret of its Bol d'Or success, it keeps close wraps on the **NR500** project. Honda personnel get especially tight-lipped when pieces of the bike are shed in the pits, as was the case during the Laguna Seca roadrace last July. You'll recall that a Honda spokesman blamed "**valves**" for Spencer's first-heat DNF. Well, **our spy** at Laguna needed proof, and watched as Honda mechanics yanked the engine from the frame for examination. The team transporter afforded the only privacy, which is where the dissection took place. Our spy, who's used to long-hour surveillance stints, began his vigil outide the van—camera in hand, of course. The moment came when a mechanic lifted the door to enter, revealing a half-dressed engine. Parts of the engine were within focal range of his camera, and click, history was recorded. The accompanying photo shows eight shiny cam



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Spy photo of unwrapped NR500 engine

Revealing eight shiny cam lobes.

lobes. This is the first time we know of that **internal pieces** of the NR500 were viewed without Honda's approval.

• Elsewhere on the roadrace front, **Eddie Lawson** scored a double on American asphalt by winning the Superbike title. Lawson won the 250cc honors earlier in the year, then sewed up the production bike crown at Daytona in October with a third-place finish behind the Honda tandem of Freddie Spencer and Mike Spencer. The Spencer Boys finished the production race in alphabetical order.

Defending champ Wes **Cooley** was absent from the race, having **broken** his **hip** in a crash during practice. Cooley had back-to-back Superbike championships for Yoshimura/Suzuki.

• While Suzuki lost the Superbike title, it clung tenaciously to NMRA's Pro Stock crown, thanks to **Terry Vance**. Vance won the National Motorcycle Racing Association's Pro Stock for the second straight year, and in the process was honored as the organization's Rider of the Year. And while throttle-jock Vance garnered his two trophies, tuner **Byron Hines** gathered his golden wrenches in preparation for next year. But on the way to the garage, Hines stopped off at the NMRA offices with Vance to receive Mechanic of the Year honors.

The Vance/Hines one-two punch didn't score as well in **Top Fuel**, where they watched Bo O'Brochta walk away with honors. As consolation, the V&H GS1100-based fueler dethroned O'Brochta at the Indy Nationals earlier in the year. Inside sources at Suzuki claim the fueler cranks out more than **375 horsepower**. The trick now for Hines is to get it consistent like O'Brochta's bike.

• Consistency paid off for Curt Comer this year. Comer won the AMA National Trials Championship by placing his **Montesa Cota 349** to five firsts in the eight-meet series. Since the AMA awards points to a rider for his best five showings, Comer plonked through the circuit with a perfect score.

• Broc **Glover** continued his winning ways last fall. After putting the AMA 500cc National trophy on his mantle, Glover directed his knobbies to the **Trans-USA** series and won that, too. The overall win there gives Glover AMA gold stars in the 125-250- and 500cc classes.

• In other motocross-related news, 1978 Supercross champ **Marty Tripes** has called it quits. Tripes was the winner of the inaugural **Superbowl of Motocross** in 1972, when the race was part of the Trans-AMA series, forerunner to the Trans-USA. Here's another trivia tip useful for your benchracing season this winter: Although Supercross is considered an American-inspired sport, a European rider was its first series champion. **Pierre Karsmakers** of Holland won the title in **1974**. Karsmakers won the 250cc division, while Gary Semics and his Husky captured the 500cc limelight. Two years later Supercross was trimmed down to only one class—250cc—as it remains today. •

Winners & Losers:

1981's Hot Shots, Hot Shoes and Also-Rans

After the flag falls, you can't argue the facts.

• The nice thing about racing is that you know exactly where you stand with the competition. Either you win or you lose. There is no in between, no subjective criticism from others, and by all means no "ifs" and "maybes." The man who crosses the finish line first wins. The horde following him loses.

But at season's end we still hear the ifs and maybes when the riders get to lick their wounds, and the tuners and sponsors take inventory of their equipment and money: "If I had just held the gas on a little longer going into Turn One . . ." and "Maybe we'll get more horsepower next year if we use . . ."

And so, while the racers bask in a few months of rationalization and possibility, CYCLE GUIDE enjoys the armchair luxury of selecting what we feel are the Winners and Losers of 1981. We do so not to second-guess the results or play Monday-morning quarterback, but to point out the racers who deserve center-stage attention.

Further, there are no ifs and maybes in our tabulations. Just names and reasons.

ROADRACING:

• Marco Lucchinelli did what Barry Sheene (1978), Virginio Ferrari (1979) and Randy Mamola (1980) fell short of doing. Lucchinelli beat Kenny Roberts to the 500cc-class points table and feasted first for 1981.

After winning the first three races of the year and appearing headed for championship Number Four, The King encountered trouble. Foremost of his worries were Randy Mamola and Marco "Lucky" Lucchinelli on their trimmed-down Suzukis. Their bikes were lighter and quicker last year, so they started winning races. Further, Roberts' new square-four engine, although proving more powerful than its in-line four predecessor, sat too high in the frame, creating handling problems for the Goodyear-shod monoshocker. Roberts didn't win again in 1981. It wasn't a good year for KR.

While Lucchinelli is the international roadrace winner for 1981, Kawasaki's Eddie Lawson takes the prize for American racing. Lawson shut down the competition early in the 250cc AMA championship by winning a string of races. It was his second quarter-liter title.

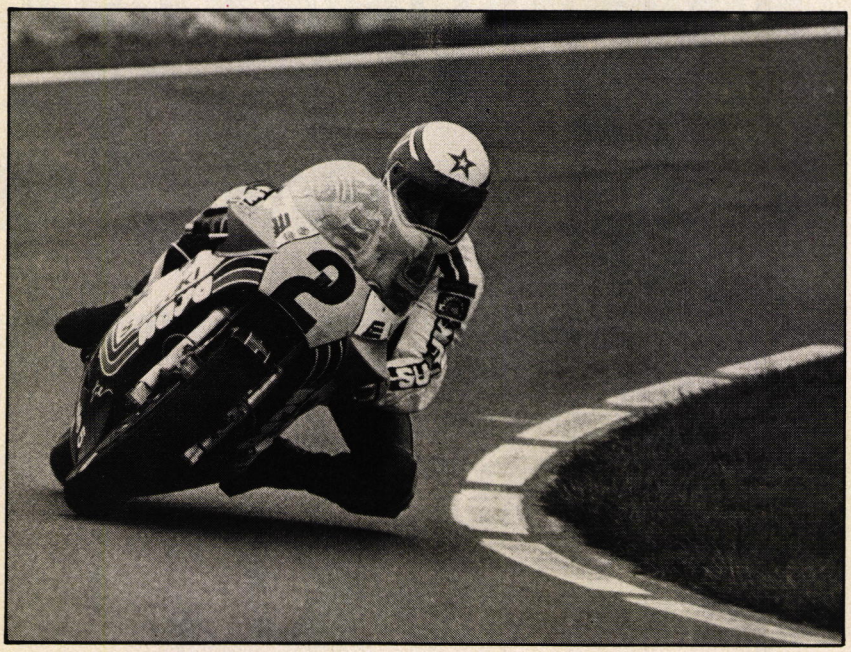
But while Lawson had little competition in the 250 chase, there was plenty of excitement among the Superbikes. There was the trio of Hondas, a stable of Yoshimura/Suzukis and several potent privateer entries to squelch. But the Kawboy saddled-up and lassoed the Superbike trophy as well, becoming the first-ever double winner in the United States Road Race Championship.

While Lawson's double crown earns him America's 1981 roadrace Winner, Kenny Roberts tops the Loser balloting for overseas *and* American tarmac racing. Not only did KR abdicate his 500cc crown, but this was the first year since 1974 that The King didn't win an AMA National roadrace.

MOTOCROSSING:

• Honda's third straight 500cc world championship earns it Winner for 1981. Honda owes its success to Roger De Coster, whose leadership and knowledge of racing solidified the team into a formidable force on the world motocross scene. Andre Malherbe's second title bears proof to one of De Coster's Axioms for Racing Motocross: You should learn to speak Belgian, or at least fake a Flemish accent.

Winner on American turf is Broc Glover. After losing his 125cc AMA National title last year, Glover switched to the 500cc class for 1981. He promptly won that title, then stepped aboard some old 250cc-class machinery to win the pitiful Trans-USA series, too. Some say Glover is



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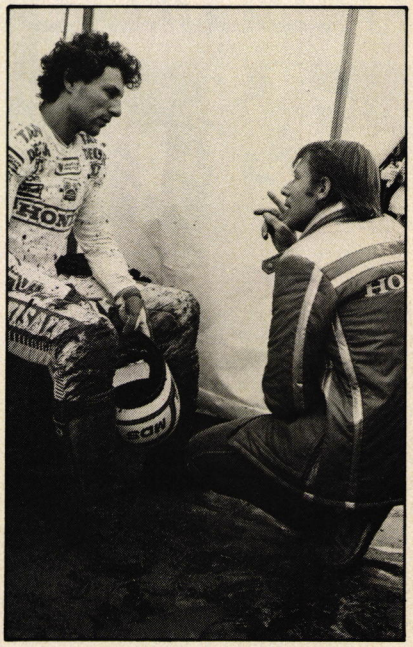
Marco Lucchinelli the legionnaire

On a rampage through Europe on his way past Kenny Roberts.



Honda's Malherbe and De Coster

Behind the scenes for 500cc strategy.

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THE KINGDOME FEBRUARY 13 & 14

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Broc Glover

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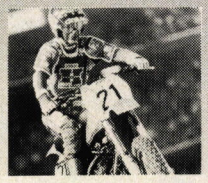
Kent Howerton



Donnie Hansen

Mark Barnett

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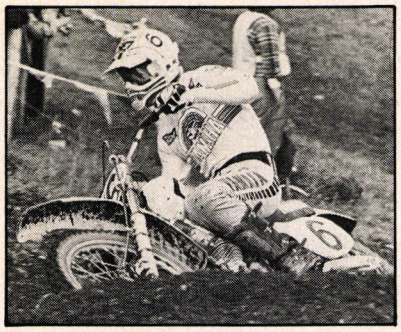


Glover winning Unadilla Trans-USA

Heading for another championship.

the hottest piece of merchandise on knobby tires. Yamaha seems to think so and was rumored to have signed him to a two-year, $500,000 contract.

An honorary CYCLE GUIDE Winner's nod goes to the United States Motocross and Trophee des Nations team. Nothing more needs to be said about them. They were great.

While Honda reaps fame and glory overseas in the 500cc class and through the U.S. des Nations team accomplishments, it was the marque used as a berm by Yamaha and Suzuki on American tracks. In the three AMA National championships, The Big Red failed all three times, sending its riders home with red faces and no gold. Kawasaki's Green Machine played like Big Red for 1981, too. Both are Losers for the year.

We don't have to look overseas for the international motocross Loser, either. It's right here in middle-America: Ohio, to be precise, where the AMA has its headquarters. Through lack of enthusiasm to encourage U.S. rider interest and participation abroad, the AMA succeeded in losing one of America's three USGP sanctions. The Mid-Ohio 125cc USGP is history. Thank you, Westerville, Ohio.

FLATTRACKING:

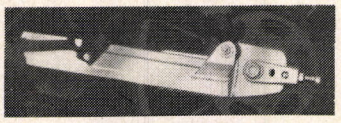
• Roberts/Lawwill Racing drifts out of our post-season Turn Four first in the flat-track category. The team snatched top honors in Class C when Mike Kidd won the No. 1 plate and first-year expert Jim Filice took Rookie-of-the-Year.

Kidd's story is unusual, since he began the season for R/L Racing helping develop the Yamaha XV750 for the roundy-rounds. Kidd stuck to his job, and the XV showed favorable results—on the practice track. Come race day, though, the Oriental Express derailed and failed to make a single National. Luckily for Kidd, too, since it allowed him track-time on Lawwill's XR750. By season's end he was top man in the Winston Pro Series.

While R/L Racing was unanimous choice for 1981 Winner, there was a dead heat for Loser. They are, in alphabetical

Continued

THE ARM



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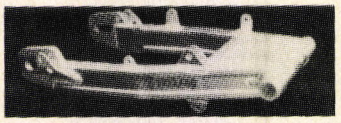

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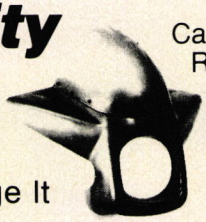

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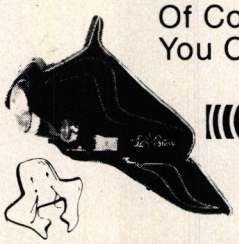

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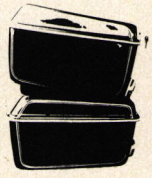

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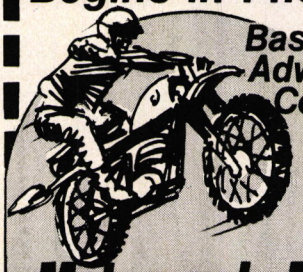

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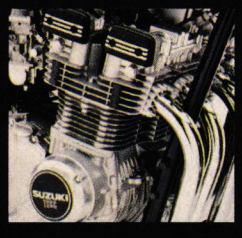

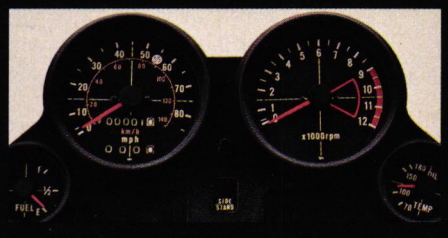

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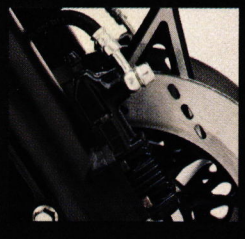

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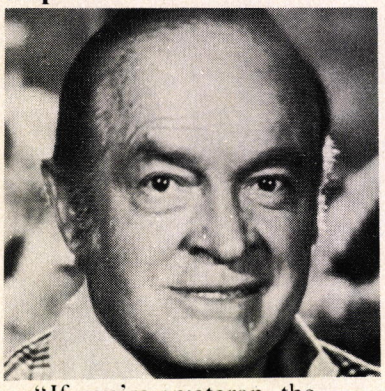

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"And discharge review for an additional 6046 veterans is in process.

"Giving a hand to veterans is another powerful reason for us to help keep Red Cross ready.

"Lend a hand."

Keep Red Cross ready.

Mentor Lawwill and plebe Jim Filice

"Yes, you have to ride the XV750."

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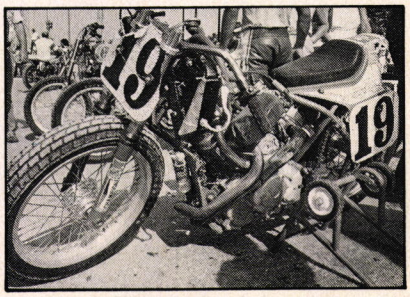
order, Randy Goss, Honda, Gary Scott and Yamaha.

Goss got the crust for 1981 when he failed to yield to the starter's black flag in a qualifying heat at the San Jose Mile last September. Had Goss heeded the black flag, he could have qualified for the Main during one of the Semis. So while he scored two Ascot Half-Mile wins, he had a double-zero at San Jose; his bike lasted one lap at the spring race, while he DNS the fall round. And it was the second San Jose that probably cost him The Plate.

Honda's 1981 misfortune in the Winston Pro Series began at Houston where Freddie Spencer crashed. Things got worse at every half-mile and mile race on the circuit, as the Honda NS750 was plagued by little or no horsepower, and wallowed both in the pits and on the track. Further, in the tradition of the NR500, the bike looked strange, and most fans couldn't develop a sense of loyalty to it.

Labeling Gary Scott as a Loser is like booing the Dallas Cowboys, America's football team. You see, Scott is surely America's flattrack racer. Every fan loves



Spencer's NS750 after Indy crash

Honda's entire season: a wreck.

©1982 TOM RILES

him, since, after all, he represents the working class. But we're talking Winning and Losing, and Scott's second-place in the Winston Pro tally was the fifth time he's done that. And according to Scott, second place is losing.

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Gary Scott trying to smile

He will only when the 5 changes to 1.

There's not much we can add about the Yamaha flattrack venture. Like the Honda, the XV750 was a loser, even considering 1981 as a development year. As consolation to the team's effort, the XV was always clean and tidy, and its Mert Lawwill/Dick Mann handicraft was entertaining to admire. But horsepower, not looks, wins AMA Grand National races. You can bet Mert Lawwill intends to spend the winter looking for that horsepower, too.

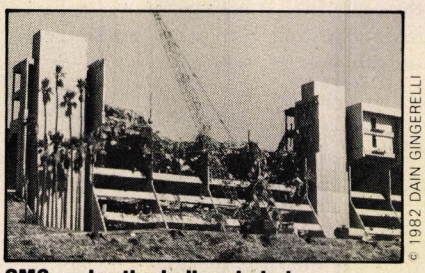
DRAGRACING:

• Bo O'Brochta's green Allied Vans top fueler trips our green light first for 1981. O'Brochta's consistency was amazing, but what was even more startling was his nearness to breaking into the sixes. To date, O'Brochta's best ET is a 7.08-second run—that done in 1980. Even so, he is dragracing's 1981 Winner, because nobody could beat him last year—consistently, anyway.

And because *none* of the top fuelers got into the sixes, the entire nitro-guzzling field is the 1981 Loser. Many of the top runners, O'Brochta and Jim Bernard among them, felt 1981 would be the year motorcycling would crack the six-second nut. It didn't happen, so we'll have to wait while they stage for the 1982 season.

HOME SWEET HOME:

• The Laguna Seca Champion Spark Plug Classic is a winner for 1981. After years of classic billing—according to the race program, anyway—the LSCSPC was finally acknowledged as just that by press, racers and spectators. And while spectator attendance enjoyed an increase, the race itself developed into a match-up between 500cc GP machinery and the AMA's F1 conglomeration of 1000cc four-strokes and 750cc two-strokes. Don't be surprised when Laguna Seca is the sight of an FIM world championship Grand Prix—that is, if we are ever awarded a sanction.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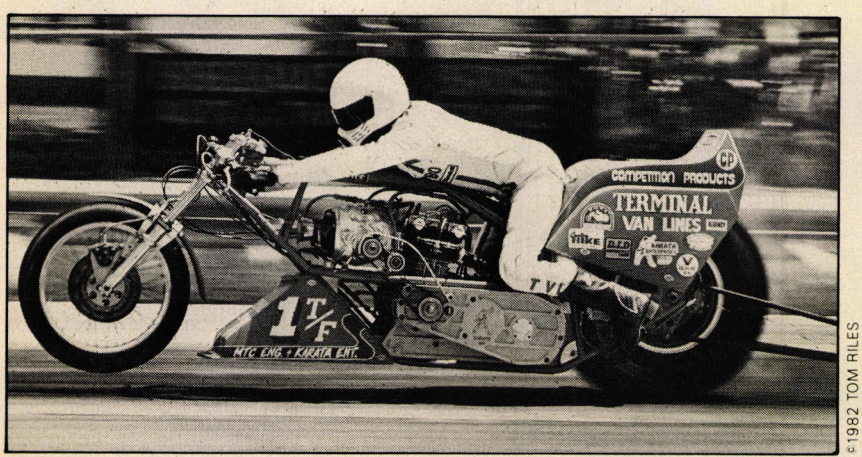
OMS under the ball and chain

Decadence and decay of the Big O.

Ontario Motor Speedway maintained its grip as Loser for the tenth year in a row. However, as jackhammers and cement crushers move into place, it appears The Big O will relinquish its dominance and get out of racing altogether. There will be nothing left of racing's white elephant to indicate that it was ever there, proving once and for all that nothing from nothing leaves nothing. *—Dain Gingerelli* ●



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Bo O'Brochta and his No. 1 fueler

In the Green in 1981 and maybe the sixes in 1982.

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LETTERS *Love, Beauty and The Force.*

CYCLE MISGUIDED

I've noticed in your past two issues (October and November, 1981) that you have stated in the CYCLE GUIDE's Cycle Guide column that the Yamaha 750 Seca has a chain final drive. I may be wrong, but don't they all have a shaft final drive?

Dwayne Sagraves
Paris, Kentucky

Thanks for catching the typo. And for giving us the shaft—ed.

BUDDING ARTIST

I would like some information on the 1982 Yamaha Virago customized by Billy Budde that you showed on pages 31 and 32 of your October Guide Lines. Please send me any information on how I can get in touch with Billy Budde, so I can customize my own personal Virago. Inform him that he is an extremely good customizer and has a work of art.

Mark W. Angel
Graham, North Carolina

Write to Billy Budde's Custom Motorcycles, 15640 E. 14th St., San Leandro, California 99578; phone (415) 276-0739—ed.

I think that CYCLE GUIDE is a very informative magazine, especially with your riding impressions of exciting, rare machinery like the Honda CX Turbo, the CB1100R, the Yamaha XJ650 and the RD350. The full two-page color pictures should be in the centerfold. It sure would make work more enjoyable with those fine pictures hanging over my workbench.

Carl Massart
Sarver, Pennsylvania

Now that's what we call benchracing—ed.

SIDESTOOD

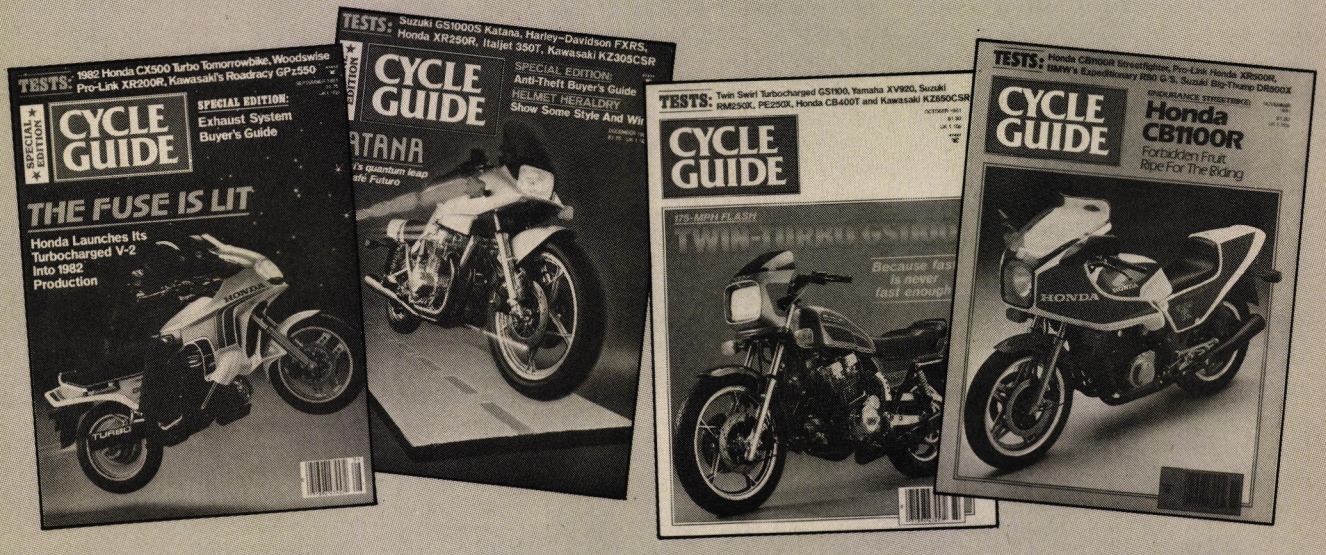
In reference to Bob's letter concerning Honda's sidestand (*CG*, Sept. '81): I would guess offhand that he has a Honda Hawk. I own a '78 Hawk and have the same problems. The wind blew mine over and cracked my new handlebar-mounted clear fairing. I have looked at all local Honda dealers and have been unable to find a stand to replace it with. My husband finally bent the stand out, which helped me some.

Needless to say, one of the first things I look for in a new model is the sidestand. If it won't hold the motorcycle up in a slight wind, then I don't buy the motorcycle. Seems like the guys who design never test the small things that make motorcycling a pleasure.

Nell Blackledge
Prentiss, Missouri

So you want the details of a Honda with a useless sidestand? I have one: a 1977 Honda CB400T. It fell over three times before I realized the sidestand was the problem. We won't discuss the damage—

FOUR GOOD REASONS WHY YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS ONE EXCITING ISSUE OF CYCLE GUIDE


TESTS: 1982 Honda CX500 Turbo Tomorrowbike, Woodswise Pro-Link XR200R, Kawasaki's Roadracy GPz550
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LETTERS

everyone knows what happens when a bike falls over. The stand keeps the bike vertical, and don't *even* think about putting it on the sidestand on a slight downhill slope. It will fall over before you turn loose of the handlebar. As you can see, I really like my sidestand. A real piece of cowpatty.

Dean C. Gillilard
Seattle, Washington

Everyone knows where cowpatties belong: on flat stretches of cornfields—ed.

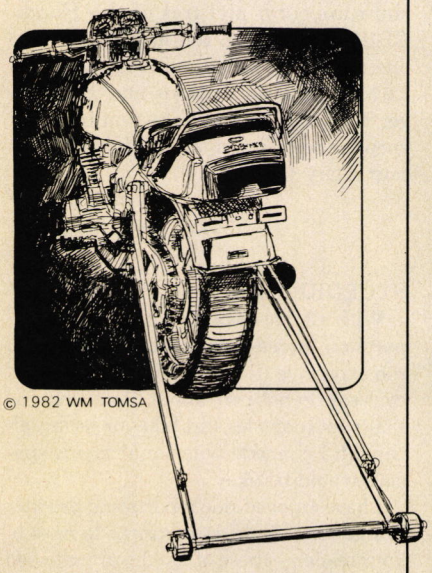
THE FORCE IS WITH US

Steve Thompson has come brilliantly close to defining with mere words, the magic of motorcycling. His recognition of something "beyond" transportation and recreation is universally felt among cyclists.

The core of the experience, I feel, is the thrill of the chase. It's the movement without logical direction that allows us the freedom to hunt down and annihilate the detritus that accumulates in our multi-media-assaulted psyches. We are indeed running into life, full-bore and with our eyes pasted to the road ahead.

Thomas Rankin
La Jolla, California

We've always found that Elmer's does the job quite effectively. What's your brand? —ed.

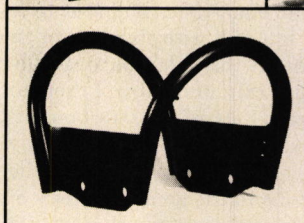


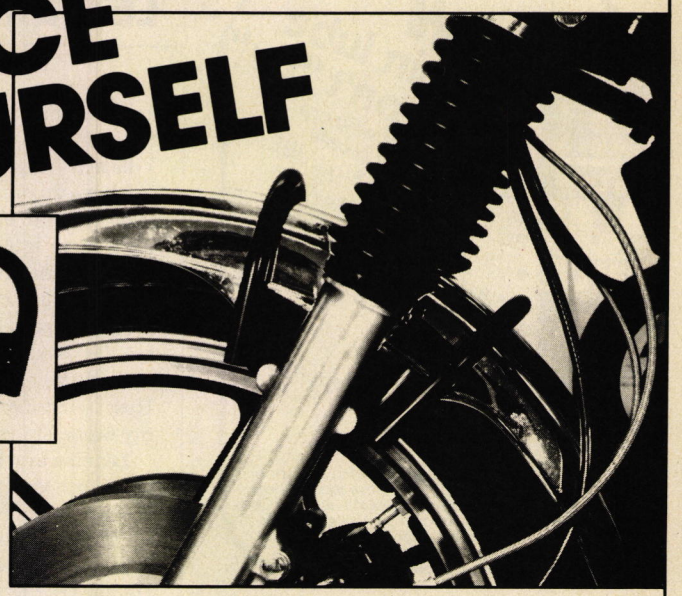
Steve Thompson, you devil you. You understand! About my motorcycling, anyway. Let me elaborate. Two days ago, I returned home to New York City after a 30-day, 8000-mile-plus ride across the USA. I rode alone.

In July I purchased a GS650G for the trip. After three non-riding years, I had to rekindle the proper riding frame-of-mind

Continued

BRACE YOURSELF





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LETTERS

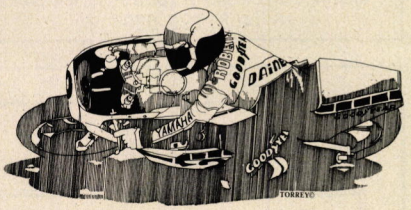
and develop my riding skills. Finally, on September 11, I rode out of Greenwich Village.

I have crossed this country by plane, train and auto many times, but never have I felt more in touch with this land or its people than on this pilgrimage. I rode through sun, rain and snow. I crossed mountain passes above 12,000 feet on rutted dirt roads. I met and spoke to many individuals. But underneath it all, the Rosetta Stone to the arcane matters of my being, stood the motorcycle.

Leaning into mountain curves or falling down into valley floors, I felt the calm assurance that all that matters is the now of it. Moments of graceful clarity were achieved as perfect lines were executed through rights, then lefts.

"No" to all those non-riding types who say riding is running. "Yes" to those of us who know riding is a pathway to our essence. It's just a way of understanding—not the only way, just a way. And it's not for everyone.

Joe Zaleski
New York, New York



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FOOTNOTES

On page 27 of your October issue there's a Yamaha 750 Seca advertisement with a rider wearing a pair of Full Bore boots. I'm interested in buying a pair. Could you possibly send me any information about where to get them?

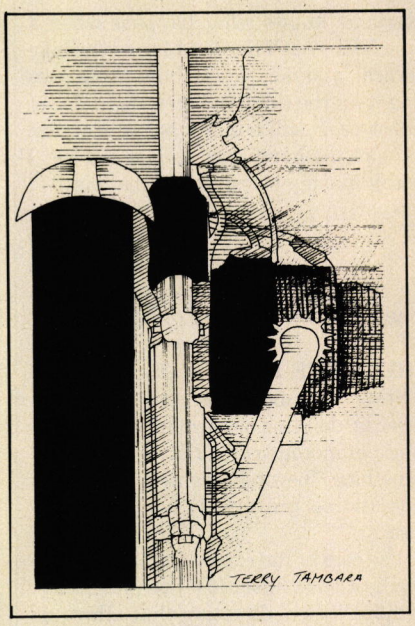
James W. Torkel
Forest Park, Illinois

Contact Yankee Cycle Corp., 520 Del Oro Dr., Dept. CG, *Ojai, California 93023—ed.*

I read with interest the article on Roadman boots in the April issue of your magazine. It was only at the end of the story that I noticed that once again I was literally left out in the cold. Since the sizes of the boots are limited, I will never be able to find out for myself just how good they are. Someday, I keep telling myself, they will include me—size 14C.

Samuel H. McKean III
Milwaukie, Oregon

Write to Roadman Boots, 254 Orangeburgh Rd., Old Tappan, New Jersey 07640; or phone: (201) 768-8967—ed.



CUPID POWER

I'm in love. This is it—the real thing. I'm ready to sell my CXT, because I'd rather ride the CB1100R any day of the week.

David N. Van Torin
Vienna, Virginia

Best wishes to you both—ed.

I hate you guys. Don't do a story on and show me color pictures of the Honda CB1100R and then tell me I can't have one. I'd sell my house, my Moto Guzzi 850 Le Mans, my wife and kids and the dog to get my hands on one. Take that back: I'd keep the dog. You guys really know how to hurt a guy. OUCH!

Ken Czarlinsky
Tarrytown, New York

STUPORBIKES

With all due respects, I have tired of reports on increasingly exotic, impractical, too expensive (for most) Japanese motorcycles. I do not care about Turbocharged 1100cc motorcycles, dirt bikes or racing, although I concede occasional racing specials would be okay.

I have enjoyed ride reports and product evaluations—features pertinent to most of your readers—those of us who are satisfied with our three-year-old bikes (mine's a KZ650.) Perhaps I have become an old fart at age 31 and should subscribe to something that speaks of RIDING as I know it. Magazines should be written by journalists not for journalists.

Sam Kalter
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

But some like it hot—ed.

SUZUKI.
PERFORMANCE ABOVE ALL

SP-500

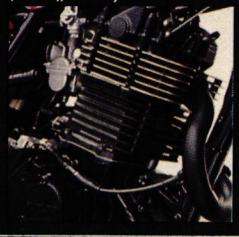
CYCLE WORLD magazine named the 1981 SP-500 the best dual-purpose bike of the year. For 1982, it's still the best.

The potent 4-stroke SOHC engine features counterbalancers for smoothness and a Twin Swirl Combustion Chamber for increased power and fuel efficiency. Long-travel suspension has been further refined by adding front air forks.

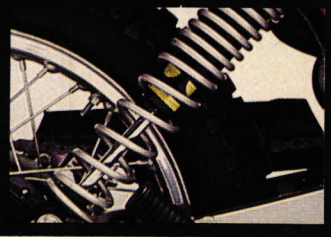
Tough off-road features and racy styling are visible everywhere: Fenders, footpegs, aluminum alloy rims, full floating rear brake... even a folding gear shift lever.

The 1982 SP-500. Nothing tops it in the dirt and on the street.

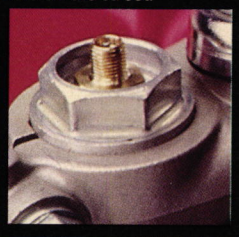
4-stroke TSCC engine:
This potent thumper features Suzuki's exclusive TSCC design for even greater power and fuel efficiency.



Long-travel suspension:
Features leading axle forks in front and laid down gas/oil shocks in the rear.



Front air forks:
Provide better handling in the dirt and a smoother ride on the street.



SUZUKI®

It says Honda on the tank, but it's got DeCoster written all over it.

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. Designed for operator use only. CRs are designed for motocross use only and are sold "AS IS" without warranty. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. © 1981 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda Motor Co., Inc., Dept. 783, Box 9000, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

1. New dual-flow cooling system, because a hot engine is one thing, a too hot engine is another.
2. Radiators have been moved to improve balance and lower center of gravity.
3. New cylinder porting and expansion chamber.
4. 43 mm air-adjustable forks with 12.0 inches of travel.
5. New Pro-Link™ linkage ratios.
6. Extruded aluminum alloy swing arm.
7. 11.7 inches of travel in rear.
8. Double leading shoe front brake.
9. 219.4 pounds overall. 13.4 inches of ground clearance.

Roger DeCoster has swung his leg over a good many fine motorcycles on his way to five World Championships. But precious few that he'd put his name on.

Until the 1982 Honda CR250R.

DeCoster has been working with Honda engineers since this bike was a blank sheet of paper.

He helped develop the frame geometry which is so advanced, he says, that the riding position is even better than the Honda works bikes.

He helped us build an even broader powerband into the already potent water pumper.

He helped us evaluate new Pro-Link™ suspension linkage rates. And reposition the radiators and engine for a lower center of gravity.

Then, when paperwork was done, Roger helped us test and fine tune the final product. And when the dust had settled, one thing was clear. The CR250R is so nimble, so powerful, so competitive that anyone would be proud to put his name on it.

Even Roger DeCoster.

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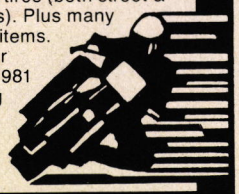

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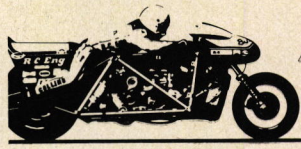

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between signal changes.
She rolled down her window asking for directions,
I flipped up my shield and asked for her name.
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It used to be if you didn't want a frame-mounted fairing, you had to choose between eating bug splat or putting a clear plastic barn door on your bike.

That was before Vetter made the Rooster.™

Its aerodynamic design gives riding comfort without compromising handling or sporty styling. Made of the same construction materials as the Windjammer. So you know it's built to last.

The Rooster also gives you music to move by with the optional Rooster Sound. Or, if you prefer, use the three compartments for storage.

*Whether you move with Willie Nelson, Pink Floyd or the Talking Heads, Rooster Sound will turn you into a one man traveling band.

Only $129 at your Vetter dealer. So get cocky. Take 10 minutes to put a Rooster on your bike and live a little.

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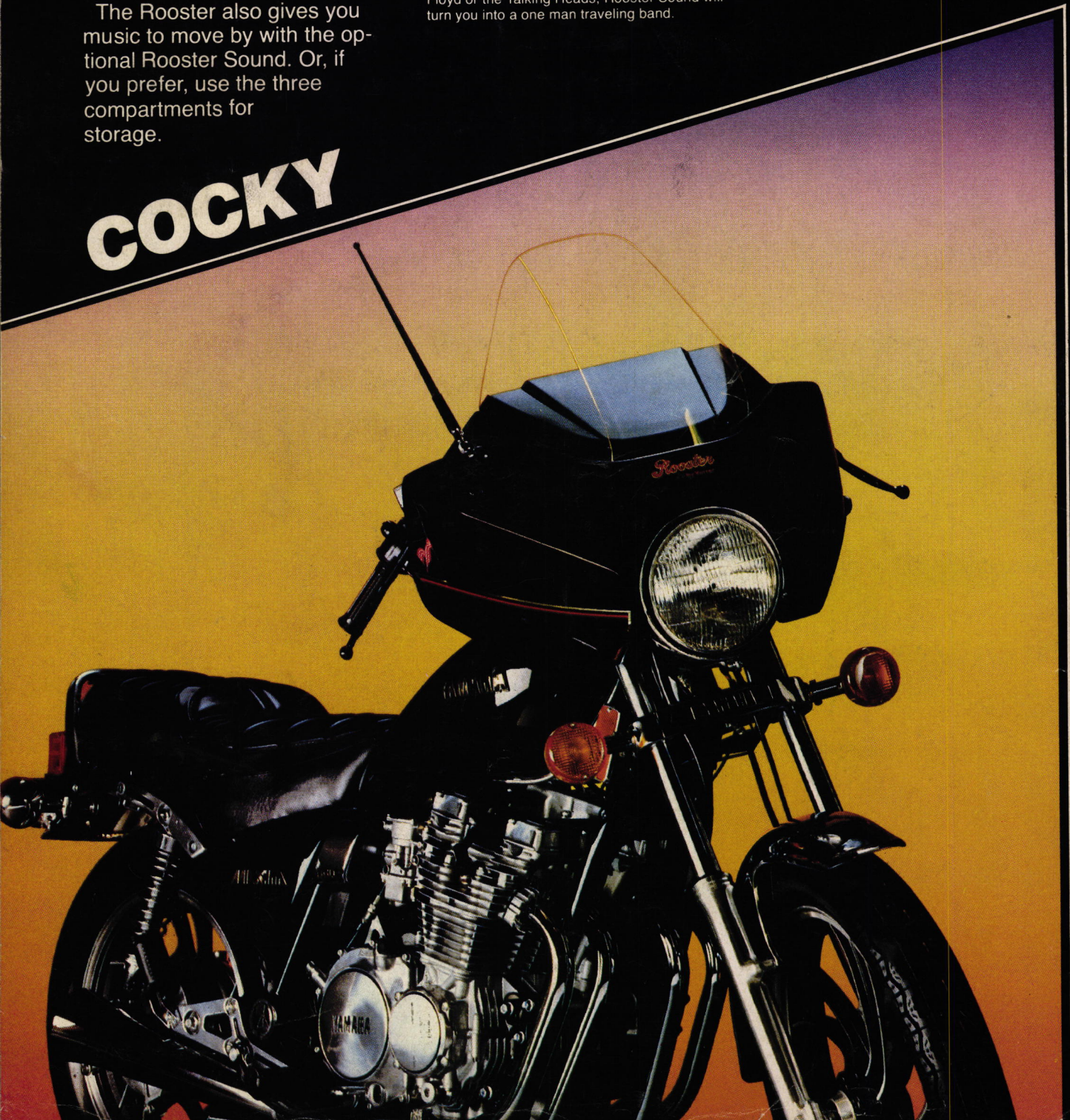
COCKY



FINALLY, A MOTORCYCLE HELMET DESIGNED BETTER THAN MOST MOTORCYCLES.

For the last ten years, motorcycle styling has been progressing rapidly. And all the while, motorcycle helmet styling has been staying just about where it was when the first full-face helmets were introduced.

Sure, there have been a few that looked different. But then, not everyone wants to look like Darth Vader.

At Shoei, we wanted to design a helmet that was new, exciting and beautiful. Of course, like all our helmets, it had to be functional.

A lot to ask of most designers.

The perfect task for the master of both form and function—Giorgetto Giugiaro. Designer of such masterpieces as the DeLorean and the BMW M1.

As you can plainly see, Giugiaro has come up with another masterpiece. The Shoei Z-100.

What you can't see are the hours of wind tunnel testing that led to the air damming chin spoiler and superthick shield. A shield that can be opened to one of seven positions with the touch of a finger and closed just as easily. A shield that combines with a seamless mold rib to allow for a square view port and excellent peripheral vision.

The helmet shell itself is built from a combination of Kevlar and fiberglass, making it super-strong yet super-light-weight. Inside, there's a shock absorbing foam liner covered with a ribbed cloth that increases ventilation and keeps the rider cool.

The Shoei Z-100. Beautifully simple. Simply beautiful.

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